Communalism In Egyptian Politics: The Experience of the Copts, 1918-1952

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores a particular experiment in political accommodation between the Muslim majority and Coptic minority in Egypt between 1918 and 1952. The Egyptians then seized the opportunity presented by a changing political system to restructure the governing arrangements between Muslims and Copts and involve the latter more fully in the political process. Many hoped to see the collaboration of the 1919 revolution spur the creation of both a new collective Egyptian identity and a state without religious bias. Traditional ways of governing, however, were not so easily cast aside, and Islam continued to have a political role.

Some Egyptians held tenaciously to the traditional arrangements which had both guaranteed Muslim primacy and served relatively well to protect the Copts and afford them some autonomy. Differences within the Coptic community over the wisdom of trusting the genuineness and durability of Muslim support for equality were accented by a protracted struggle between reforming laymen and conservative clergy for control of the community. The unwillingness of all parties to compromise hampered the ability of the community both to determine and defend its interests.

The Copts met with modest success in their attempt to become full Egyptian citizens. As one example, their influence in the Wafd, the pre-eminent political party, was very strong prior to and in the early years of the Constitutional Monarchy. As a second, their formal representation was generally adequate and, in some Parliaments, better than adequate. However, this very success produced a backlash which caused many Copts to believe, by the 1940s, that the experiment had failed: political activity had become fraught with risk for them. Coptic complaints about Muslim intolerance abounded and reflected the broad criticisms levelled at minority behaviour by Muslims. At the close of the monarchy, equality and shared power seemed notions as distant as in the disheartening years before the revolution.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

Arabic words have been transliterated largely according to the Cambridge University system. Two exceptions should be noted. A few Coptic names, which are not of Arabic origin and which appear obscure in proper transliteration, have been rendered, for the ease of the reader, in a more recognizable form. The main examples here are the names of three great churchmen: Sergius, Makarios and Cyril (or Kirillos). In addition, some Egyptian place names, which have long been familiar to the English-speaking world, have been left in their standard form. These names include Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, Damietta and Luxor.

Various source abbreviations have been used in the footnotes, and these are explained below:

Egyptian Archives

CAS	Coptic Archaeological Society, Cairo
CCEH	Centre for Contemporary Egyptian History and Documentation (Markaz Wathā'iq wa Ta'rīkh Miṣr al-Muʿāṣir), Dār al-kutub, Cairo. F = File Cabinet D = Drawer
Chamber Debates	Maḍābiṭ Majlis al-Nuwwāb, Parliament Library, Cairo.
DM	Dār al-Maḥfūẓāt, Citadel, Cairo.
DW	Dār al-Wathā'iq, Citadel, Cairo.
PPF	Palace Press Files, CCEH, Dār al-kutub, Cairo.
Senate Debates	Maḍābiṭ Majlis al-Shuyūkh, Parliament Library, Cairo.

Foreign Archives

CMS	Church Missionary Society, London.
LD	Lampson/Killearn Diaries, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University.
PHS	Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

In a polity whose raison d'être was the perfection of a society in which Muslims could fulfil their religious obligations, the place of indigenous non-Muslims posed both theoretical and practical problems. How should such a polity deal with those who had been exposed to Islam and yet declined to accept its manifest truth? There were too many non-Muslims and they performed functions, particularly in Egypt, that were too critical to the well-being of the state to be either forcibly converted en masse or exterminated. Religion was therefore made a political, social and economic determinant; it set an individual's status, friendships, tax, entitlement to government benefits, code of law and sometimes even profession and living quarters. Non-Muslims were not citizens in the full sense because loyalty to the State and to the State's religion were inextricable.[1] They were not trustworthy, and therefore Muslims required some protection from them.

Although with time an extensive body of literature pertaining to religious minorities in the Islamic lands developed, the position of minorities was firmly fixed neither in theory nor in fact; it was time and place specific. Of course, there were similarities; the public did have an idea about the appropriate place for minorities, and this idea helped set regulations and perpetuate attitudes. Still, there was some flexibility in this

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1. See Albert Hourani, A Vision of History: Near Eastern and Other Essays, Beirut, 1961, p.74.

system, A government could use Qur'ānic verses and extracts from the Hadith, the two basic sources of Islam, to justify either a lenient and beneficent attitude toward a minority or a harsh and suppressive one. Sometimes it just followed the mob. Much depended on other factors: general economic conditions, political turmoil, and the particular occupations and amount of wealth held by a minority among them.

The influx of Western ideas into Egypt in the 19th century began to change both the theory and practice of government and communal organization. These ideas opened up new opportunities to the Copts to improve their community's status and to make an active contribution to politics and the political culture. The Copts had long been excluded from politics and from certain goods which the State existed partly to provide; for the first time, new ways of thinking gave them a chance to play a serious role in determining their own destiny. Muslims, of course, as the majority, had the largest say in determining this destiny; some helped the Copts seize these new opportunities and others advocated the retention of more traditional ways. This thesis, then, is concerned with the basic policy questions of how the Egyptians restructured the governing arrangements between the majority and minority in this changing system and what factors influenced that restructuring.

Related concerns are the effect of Islam on this process and the ways in which its precepts were applied to policy matters involving minorities; the influence of the British, as the slowly retiring colonial power; and the ways in which the Copts struggled to overcome an ethnic identity the display of which had involved considerable risk in the past and which had given them no right to act in the political sphere. How did various discriminatory practices alter? Finally, how useful are ethnic and religious loyalties in accounting for political conduct in this period?

The development of new arrangements was not fixed and sudden, as might be inferred from the establishment of a constitution and parliament in 1923, but was a process with both victories and setbacks. The question of whether a satisfactory accommodation was reached by the end of this period was one that would have drawn different answers from different people.

It is not intended in this thesis to use the Egyptian situation as a basis from which to derive generalizations about the perplexing problem of ethnic conflict in other parts of the world or even in the Middle East, nor is it intended to make any categorical statements about Islam and its role in the politics of other Islamic countries. It is the purpose of this thesis only to address a particular experiment in accommodation between Egypt's majority and largest minority in the first half of this century. The results of this experiment can perhaps also be used to help measure the confluence between religious dictates and political behaviour in Egyptian society. The Copts were, in some ways, peripheral to a debate which centred on determining the proper role for religion in this society.

B. The Setting

1. The Traditional Position of the Copts and Other non-Muslims

Prior to the 19th century, the particular place of non-Muslims in Muslim polities was determined largely by the fact that Islam granted the validity of and incorporated elements of Judaeo-Christian doctrine. Muslims were therefore willing, in a general sense, to let Christians and Jews practise their religion and be ruled by their own laws and religious leaders. This system, based on separation, minimized contacts between ethnic groups and was relatively successful in containing

communal conflict; this does not, however, suggest that there was not pressure of various kinds on non-Muslims. Although semi-autonomous, these religious communities, or millets as they were called by the Ottomans who perfected the system, lived in close interdependence with the government. The ecclesiastical authorities were the government-sanctioned and supported heads of a community, and they dealt with the government on its behalf. For example, the Egyptian state relied on the Copts for taxes, the performance of certain kinds of jobs and sometimes the deflection of a mob's anger that might otherwise have been aimed toward the government. The Copts, in return, looked to the State for protection of their lives, property and right to worship;[2] a protection that was reflected in their designation as Dhimmīs or Protected Peoples and that was far more easily withheld by the State than were taxes by the Copts. The Copts also relied on the State to settle numerous intra-communal squabbles.[3] Despite the fact that the Copts disliked the Egyptian government's right to intervene in certain Coptic communal and religious matters, they often forfeited the independence and autonomy they had in other areas by inviting government mediation or partisan interference.

The Qur'ān and Hadīth are not entirely consistent in the behaviour toward non-Muslims that they enjoin upon Muslims. Some verses in the Qur'ān react strongly to the hostility displayed toward Islam and the Prophet's divinely ordained mission by Christians and Jews.[4] Others,

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2. One interesting Upper Egyptian manifestation of this Muslim obligation to protect Copts was that Beduin, at least until the 1930s, formed special relationships with Copts, offering protection in return for financial assistance. Jacques Berque, Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution, trans. Jean Stewart (London 1972), p.67.
3. Otto Meinardus, Christian Egypt: Faith and Life (Cairo 1970), p.356.
4. There are several such verses in Suras II and V. For example, one verse in Sura V instructs Believers not to take Jews and Christians as friends because they were the friends only of each other: "Whoso of you makes them his friends is one of them. God guides not the people of the evil doers". See The Koran Interpreted, trans. by A.J. Arberry, part 2 (New York 1973), p.136.

notably in Suras II and V, advise that any man who believes in God and does good, be he Christian or Jew, will reap his just reward from the Lord and will have no cause for fear or sorrow. The Copts were in a particularly fortunate position for the Prophet, who had a Coptic wife, preached especial kindness to them: "When you conquer Egypt, be kind to the Copts for they are your protegés and kith and kin".[5] Other sayings, however, abuse non-Muslims, emphasize their inferiority and warn Believers to be on their guard; for example, "deference to the unbeliever is unbelief".[6]

Non-Muslims suffered from specific disabilities, some of which were serious and interfered with their freedom of worship. For example, there were restrictions on repairing old churches and building new ones,[7] non-Muslims could not testify in court or bear arms, and regulations governed their appearance and behaviour in order that they be clearly distinguishable from Muslims and not affront the sensibilities of the latter.

The disparate legacy allowed some governments, as noted, to show considerable generosity toward the Copts. The regulations were not always rigidly and routinely enforced, and the problems Copts suffered were sporadic; the two things which they may have felt most keenly, arbitrary government and an onerous tax system, weighed just as heavily,

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5. Quoted in Shaykh Damanhuri on the Churches of Cairo, ed. and trans. Moshe Perlman (Berkeley 1975), p.4. Another Hadith reads that "Whoso revileth a dhimmī will be flogged on judgment day with lashes of fire". When ᶜAmr 'ibn al-'Ass was Viceroy in Egypt, the Caliph ᶜUmar reminded him that the Prophet had said, "Whoso unfairly treateth a convenantor or imposeth too heavy a burden on him, will I be his adversary on judgment day..." Al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Khidr Ḥusain, "Tolerance of Islam", Nūr al-'Islām 3 (part 6) (1932), p.16.
6. From al-'Ashbāh wa-l-Naẓā'ir; quoted in Shaykh Damanhuri, p.56.
7. Two sayings on this subject are attributed to the Prophet. The first insists that no church be erected in Islamic territory, and once a church has been destroyed it should not be rebuilt. The second is that there should be "no celibacy in Islam, nor church construction". Shaykh Damanhuri, p.52.
8. See those listed in M. Belin, "Fetoua Relatif à la condition des Zimmis", Journal Asiatique, 4eme série, tom.19 (1852), pp.97-110. One list of apparel specified that dhimmīs could not wear shoelaces and, if they wore shoes without laces, the shoes were to be coarse material and unpleasant colour. Shaykh Damanhuri, p.56.

in most cases on the True Believers. It can be said, however, that their social and civil inferiority made their Muslim neighbours as much inclined to take advantage of them as was the government.[9]

One perennial subject of controversy was the employment of non-Muslims in the state apparatus. There were two basic objections to this employment: (1) it was distasteful to see non-Muslims occupying positions which gave them power over Muslims, and (2) non-Muslims could not be trusted to fill one of the goals of the state - the promotion of Islam.[10] Of necessity, these objections were generally overlooked, particularly in Egypt where the Copts dominated certain sectors of the civil service.

Necessity, however, was not of great concern to some jurists; many argued that it was unlawful to appoint non-Muslims to positions of trust and influence, and others were willing to tolerate the employment of non-Muslims in an executive rather than legislative or ruling capacity. The weight of informed Muslim opinion, however, seems to have come down on the side of those opposed to hiring non-Muslims. Of course, non-Muslims were not only employed but sometimes reached positions of influence. These theories did have an effect, however, in that they left a lingering sense in Muslims of the impropriety of employing dhimmīs. This meant that the position of such employees was precarious; they were subject to periodic and summary dismissal as well as to routine discrimination in promotions. In order to placate subjects grown restive, a ruler might dismiss all his non-Muslim officials and rehire them after the soothing lapse of a few months.

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9. Avedis Sanjian, The Armenian Communities in Syria Under Ottoman Dominion (Cambridge 1965), pp.274-5.
10. Richard Gottheil, "An Answer to the Dhimmis: Translation of a Manuscript by Ghāzi Ibn al-Wāsiti", Journal of the American Oriental Society XLI (1921), p.418. E.I.J. Rosenthal, Political Thought in Medieval Islam (Cambridge 1958), p.83. I. Belin, "Fetoua Relatif à la Condition des Zimmis", Journal Asiatique 18 (1851), pp.417-516.

The position of non-Muslims was probably most precarious in times of financial stress or when Christian governments threatened the state.* In a place where religion determined political loyalty, Copts were bound to be suspected of collaborating with foreign Christian enemies. Problems also arose from the indiscreet display of wealth and power; Muslims sometimes reacted sharply to any evidence that non-Muslims had forgotten their place.

2. Population, Culture and Religious Divisions

Census statistics for this period exist but are less than accurate. Problems were compounded by inept techniques for collecting information and a popular fear that correct answers would increase one's vulnerability to government exactions. The figures relating to Egypt's minorities may be the most suspect of all. Egypt would not have been the first government to have undercounted its minorities in order to undercut the grounds on which communal desires rest. The Copts have long complained about the inaccuracy of the censuses, which usually number them at around 7 per cent of the population,[11] and have claimed to comprise 15 to 20 per cent of the population. The Church has never been permitted to do a formal counting of its flock, and its informal estimates, like those of some foreign Christians, err on the side of generosity. It is therefore impossible to determine exactly how many Copts there were in this period; even British estimates of the time ranged between 7 and 20 per cent. The correct figures lie somewhere between the two extremes.[12]

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11. CENAM staff, "The Coptic-Muslim Conflict in Egypt: Modernization of Society and Religion Renovation", CENAM Reports, 1972-3, pp.31-54. See also Edward Akin for more recent complaints, A Lonely Minority: the Modern Story of Egypt's Copts (New York 1963), pp.23-4.
12. Meinardus, Christian Egypt, p.367. He suggests a figure of 10 per cent.

*A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects (London 1930). p.37.

Copts lived in every province of Egypt and in no one were they in the majority. There were more Copts in Upper than in Lower Egypt, and a large number lived in Cairo and Alexandria.[13] The 1917 census recorded that 76 per cent of the Orthodox, 91 per cent of the Protestant and 62 per cent of the Catholic Copts lived in Upper Egypt. Slightly more than half resided in four Upper Egyptian provinces: al-Minyā, 'Asyūt, al-Sūhāj and Qinā.[14] The 1937 census estimated the Copts at approximately 5 per cent of the rural population;[15] this suggests that they were marginally more urban than their Muslim compatriots. This lack of a geographic centre made it difficult for them to protect themselves from the occasional hostility of individuals or the state. It was also next to impossible to mount a separatist movement; they could not even hope to take their most populous province, 'Asyūt, with a Coptic population of 22.4 per cent in 1917.[16]

One important element in preserving generally peaceful inter-communal relations was the high degree of cultural similarity. Egyptians were still fond of quoting Cromer's saying that a Copt was an Egyptian who worshipped in a church and a Muslim was one who prayed in a mosque.[17] The perceptions and values of Copts and Muslims were similar and both communities were at least partly aware of this. A Coptic peasant had more in common with a Muslim peasant than with

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13. In 1917, 75 per cent of all Copts lived in Upper Egypt, 15 per cent in Lower Egypt, and 10 per cent in the Governates of Cairo, Alexandria, the Canal, Damietta and Suez. All the 1917 data are from The Census of Egypt (1917), vol.2 (Cairo 1921).
14. Betts, Christians in the Arab East, p.61. This is from the 1940 census.
15. Baer, Population and Society (London 1964), p.97.
16. In 1917, the Coptic population of Jirjā was 15.6 per cent; of al-Minyā, 17.4 per cent, and of Qinā, 7.8 per cent. The other provinces had smaller percentages of Copts.
17. Lord Cromer, Modern Egypt, vol.2 (London 1908), p.206.

wealthy co-religionists, although this did not imply that he had a firm consciousness of class and that class interests routinely prevailed over ethnic ones. Copts and Muslims probably did not generally share much of a feeling of community; they had fewer and more superficial contacts with one another than with members of their own group. These contacts, however, became more frequent and less superficial over the course of this century.

Even in the realm of religion, the division between Copts and Muslims was not as clear as Cromer's statement suggested. Both groups shared a number of superstitions.[18] For example, they visited the shrines of one another's saints,[19] and in some places in Upper Egypt it was not unusual for Muslims to attend the Good Friday church service.[20] Coptic priests were believed by many Muslims and Copts to possess the power of healing.[21]

There were three significant Coptic sects in Egypt; the only one that was both statistically and politically important was the Orthodox sect, and its communal organization will be dealt with in detail in Chapter One. The Protestant and Catholic communities were small, with a combined total of less than 10 per cent of the entire Coptic population; and the Protestants were split into different groups. Neither Protestants nor Catholics were without influence, in part because of

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18. Sir John Bowring observed that Christian "females are equally secluded and have their harems like other Orientals. In the remote parts of Egypt, [the Copts] practise polygamy and circumcise their children... In the rural districts, the habits of the Copts are scarcely distinguishable from those of the Arabs...They adopt with the Musulman all the superstitutions of the country, whether superstitutions be of Mahometan or Christian origin...The Musulmans are less prompt to credit Christian superstitions than are the Copts to adopt those of the Musulmans..." Report on Egypt and Candia (London 1840), p.8.
19. Winifred Blackman, The Fellahin of Upper Egypt (London 1927) pp.248-58.
20. FO.407/187 No.237 (Enclosure): Memorandum on the Coptic Church, 11 September 1920.
21. Blackman, The Fellahin of Upper Egypt, pp.213-14.

their contacts with and dependency on foreigners. They were conduits for the transmission of Western ideas; and their missionary-run schools, which also educated Muslim children, were very influential. Protestants were more vocal and seemingly less traditional than Catholics and they played a significant role in promoting Anglo-American political ideas. They also advocated the reform of the Orthodox church and provided an example Orthodox reformers could envy. They, therefore, were more disliked by the Orthodox clerical establishment than were the quieter and less aggressive Catholics.[22] The latter were also brought closer to the Orthodox by their retention of the old liturgy and ritual. With rare exceptions, Coptic Catholics avoided politics. Protestants were far more active in this arena as is indicated by the careers of 'Akhnūkh and Louis Fānūs, Fahmī Wīsā, George Khayyāt, Makram ʿUbaid and Tawfīq Dūs, although the latter two chose to advance their careers by returning to Orthodoxy.

Relations between these three communities were usually strained.[23] The Orthodox were understandably unhappy with attempts to lead astray the faithful, and they worried that the fragmentation of the community would hamper its ability to protect itself. The Orthodox were also troubled by the provocative acts of Christian missionaries, and they were fearful of being thought too close to sects whose connection to foreign interlopers could easily be damning in Muslim eyes. Despite the fact that the sects viewed one another with hostility, Muslims could

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22. Père Anawati noted that in Alexandria the Coptic Catholics were viewed by the Syrian Catholics as a backward and uninfluential lot. Interview, 23 April 1979.
23. Interview Mirrīt Ghālī, 4 December 1978, and Père Anawati, 23 April 1979.

not be expected to make such fine distinctions. To them, Copts were Copts.[24] By the mid-1940s, the pressure of increased Muslim hostility forced a certain amount of formal collaboration. A Liaison Committee, representing the three Coptic sects and other non-Muslim communities in Egypt, was established. It met regularly and discussed co-ordination on matters of mutual concern. One particular interest was in government attempts to reform non-Muslim personal status jurisdiction, and another more general one was the worsening situation for non-Muslims.

a) Coptic Catholics - The first Copts were converted to Catholicism in Upper Egypt by Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century.[25] Their numbers grew slowly but steadily, and many may have converted during the brief period when Muʿallim Ghālī was chief secretary to the ruler, Muhammad ʿAli. Ghālī, a Catholic, tried to promote the fortunes of his sect, and there is some suspicion that his downfall was due to the machinations of the Orthodox establishment.

The community was protected by Austria-Hungary which claimed the right as an extension of its privilege, gained in 1699, to protect the Franciscan Mission. This right was not universally recognized and problems resulted when Austro-Hungarian consulates intervened in communal affairs.[26] An accord between the Egyptian and Austro-Hungarian governments finally granted the right of the latter to extend religious protection but with the understanding that this did not make Coptic Catholics foreign persons.

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24. However, Miṣr did report in 1947 the case of a Catholic Copt who tried and failed to get an Egyptian passport. When Egyptian officials asked him to whom he owed religious allegiance and he replied, "the Pope", they insisted that he obtain an Italian passport. Miṣr, 25 December 1947, p.1.
25. See the lists of converts in P. Gabriele Giameradini, I Primi Copti Cattolici (Cairo 1958).
26. There was no Capitulations agreement recognizing Austro-Hungarian protection of Coptic catholics. FO.371/3204, J209031/209031/16. DW Majlis al-Wuzarā'. Raqm Muḥāfaza 4. Al-Majmū a 155. Ṭawā'if Qibṭiyya. File 16 which is inside File 10.

This right, of course, disappeared with the First World War. Coptic Catholics were also under the general and somewhat vague protection of France; although at least one agreement, no doubt signed at Austro-Hungarian insistence, specifically exempted Coptic Catholics from French protection. This protection, in any case, seems never to have amounted to very much; again Coptic Catholics remained under Egyptian jurisdiction.

Orthodox hostility was able to prevent the establishment of a Coptic Catholic clerical hierarchy until the 19th century.[27] The Vatican appointed the first Coptic Catholic Patriarch in 1895. Eventually, however, the community obtained independence from Rome; Patriarchs were thereafter appointed by the local synod of bishops, with the concurrence of both the Egyptian government and the Pope. In 1908 the community drew up an organic law and established personal status courts; both were formally recognized by the Egyptian government in 1910.[28] Despite links with Rome, Coptic Catholics turned out to be no more immune to the problems of factionalism and clerical corruption than the Orthodox.

b) Coptic Protestants - American Presbyterians were the largest and most active group of missionaries working in Egypt. They began the arduous task of spreading the Gospel in the mid-19th century and, by 1878, had opened more than 35 schools. They soon found that it was easier to convert Copts than Muslims, and so they concentrated their efforts on 'Asyūṭ.[29] Some wealthy 'Asyūṭi Copts became Protestant because they were disgusted with the

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27. H.A.R. Gibbs and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, vol.1 (London 1957), p.248.
28. DW Majlis al-Wuzarā', Raqm Muḥāfaẓa 4, al-Majmūᶜa 155, Ṭawā'if Qibṭiyya, File 16 which is inside File 14.
29. The missionaries still wanted to convert Muslims but they thought that this task would be facilitated if they could train enough Copts to work as evangelists.

backwardness and corruption of their own church. They may also have been attracted by a religion that seemed more modern, and that also gave them close and perhaps useful links with Westerners.

The Protestants were recognized as a separate community in the middle of the last century, and they were accordingly granted limited jurisdiction in matters of personal status. Their leader was appointed, with the approval of the Egyptian government, by the community itself. In 1899 a communal council was established, and it included both lay and clerical notables.[30] There were different Protestant groups, but the Council was dominated by the United Presbyterian Church of Egypt.[31] In 1926 this latter group became self-governing and independent from the American Presbyterian Church. Three years later, it had 20,200 communicants with an average Sunday church attendance of 27,000.[32] The total number of Egyptian Protestants was around 60,000, and the head of the Council was 'Alixān 'Abskharūn Pasha, one of the wealthiest landowners in the country.[33]

3. The Historical Background

The Coptic community clearly occupied an inferior position and lived in some expectation of Muslim hostility, which periodically flared into violence. Nevertheless, the Copts could and did take pride in portraying themselves as the original inhabitants of Egypt, with the oldest title to the country. This was not a title which Muslims

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30. DW Majlis al-Wuzarā'. Raqm al-Muḥāfaẓa 4. Al-Majmūᶜa 141. Ṭawā'if Qibṭiyya. Files 18, 21 (inside file 14).
31. In the 1960s 14 members of the 20-man council were Presbyterian. Otto Meinardus, Christian Egypt: Ancient and Modern (Cairo 1977), p.574.
32. In 30 years' time, the number of communicants had increased by 322.75 per cent. Rev. J.R. Alexander, A Sketch of the Story of the Evangelical Church (Alexandria 1930), pp.43-7.
33. FO.141/752, 353/80A/33.

accepted, but it was difficult for them to dispute Coptic ties to Egypt and the community's right to residence when Egypt had been a Christian and mainly Coptic country at the time of the Arab conquest in the seventh century. It was not until the tenth century that Egypt was mainly Muslim in population rather than simply Muslim in ruling élite.

The position of the Copts began to improve early in the 19th century with the stability and tolerance of the Muḥammad ʿAlī dynasty. Political assimilation dates from the middle of that century, when the Coptic community ceased to be regarded by the state as an administrative unit. In 1855 their main badge of inferiority, the poll tax, was lifted. Shortly thereafter, the Copts lost their exemption from military service. They served on Egypt's appointed and elected representative bodies from the time the first Consultative Council was established in 1866, and they frequently reached high office.

Taking heart from this progress, the Copts became increasingly bold in voicing demands for equality; their audacity was either intentionally or unintentionally encouraged by the British presence. Accordingly, the first two decades of this century witnessed one of the not infrequent nadirs in inter-communal relations. There was much general unrest in this period, and tensions between Muslims and Copts were only one aspect of the problem.[34] Good will between the two communities foundered on the rock of Coptic employment in the civil service, but there were other points of dissension as well. Both Coptic notables and the communal press were active in demanding equality in civil service appointments and promotions, the provision of Christian religious instruction in

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34. Peter Mellini, Sir Eldon Gorst: The Overshadowed ProConsul (Stanford 1977), p.118.

government schools, the institution of Sunday as a holiday for Christian schoolchildren and government employees, and the appointment of more Copts to Egypt's representative bodies. In 1908 the wealthy Coptic landowner 'Akhnūkh Fānūs, organized a Coptic Reform Society to promote these demands; and he tried briefly to establish a political party of similar ilk. Neither the British nor the Egyptian governments were receptive to Fānūs' demands; he and his supporters were particularly disappointed by the reaction of the former.

The Copts had an uneasy relationship with the British: on the one hand, resentful of what they saw as inadequate support and, on the other, aware that the foreign presence guaranteed their safety. Some Copts believed that their community should not rely on the British for either the one or the other but should put their efforts into achieving harmonious relations with their Muslim compatriots. Dinshawaī,[35] the loss of civil service jobs to British officials and the 1907 financial crisis probably outraged almost as many Copts as Muslims. Both branches of the early nationalist movement, therefore, had Coptic adherents, although neither had large numbers of Christian supporters. Mustafā Kāmil, the pre-eminent nationalist leader in this period, advocated equality between Copts and Muslims and spoke of their centuries-long harmonious relationship.[36] His party, al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī (the National Party), called on Copts to join their Muslim brothers in promoting the nationalist cause and in working for unity and harmony. Kāmil's

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35. In 1906 a party of British sportsmen became involved in a fracas with villagers who objected to having their pigeons slaughtered. One Englishman was killed and several peasants, with only the most summary justice, were hanged.
36. Pierre Rondot, "L'évolution Historique des Coptes d'Egypte", Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporaine 22 (1950), p.138. Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939 (London 1962), p.207.

approach recommended him to some Copts; but toward the end of his short life, he moved, to the alarm of the Copts, in an increasingly pro-Ottoman and pan-Islamic direction. These biases received additional emphasis after his death in 1908 by his followers, and those Copts like Murqus Ḥannā, Sinūt Ḥannā and Wīsā Wāṣif who had supported the movement drifted away. The latter resigned from the party Executive Committee because of the anti-Coptic tone of the party press. With these resignations, pressure within the party to maintain a conciliatory attitude toward the Copts was removed.[37]

The second branch of the nationalist movement, that which grew up around the newspaper al-Jarīda, was more appealing to the Copts although generally less popular because it had no leader who could compare with Muṣṭafā Kāmil and lacked a common touch.[38] It was, however, free of pan-Islamic and pro-Ottoman leanings. Its political thinking and its nationalist goals centred on Egypt as a unique cultural and political entity. Among its Coptic supports were Sinūt Ḥannā and Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, but this was a bad time for even modern nationalists to gain the general support of the Coptic community. In addition, the 'Umma group, abandoned by Gorst, grew increasingly anti-British and this perhaps made it less attractive to the Copts.

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37. Both Wīsā Wāṣif and Murqus Ḥannā continued to work for an improvement in communal relations. Before and after his resignation from the party, Wāṣif opposed the Coptic demands then being made, perhaps from a fear that Coptic activists would provoke Muslims and eventually divide the communities. Wāṣif had opposed Fānūs' reform society and his political party as well; accordingly, the Coptic press referred to him as a traitor to his people. See Muhammad Sayyid Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭī: Qadīman wa Ḥadīthan (Cairo 1962), p.86. Samira Bahr, "Al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsiyya fī Miṣr", unpublished Phd thesis, University of Cairo 1977, pp.397-8.
38. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid; Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations (London 1968), p.201. Salāma Mūsā remarked on the fact that the Copts were attracted by the group's idea of Egypt for the Egyptians in The Education of Salama Musa, trans. L.O. Schuman (Leiden 1961), p.43.

When Fānūs' Coptic Reform Society decided in 1908 to push its claim for equality of employment, it sparked what has been labelled a press "war". At first, the press reaction was mild; al-Jarīda, al-Liwā' and al-Mu'ayyid all agreed that religion should not influence influence employment.[39] Then, al-Liwā' and al-Mu'ayyid abandoned their moderate approach and, along with al-Dustūr, attacked Coptic demands.[40] Misr and al-Watan, the two Coptic papers, responded in kind and "war", which continued until 1911, was declared.

The one side characterized Islam and Muslim rule as oppressive, and the other criticized the temerity of the first and upheld the beneficence of Islam.[41] The Copts complained that they were inadequately represented in the bureaucracy, and the Muslims that the Copts monopolized the civil service.[42] Salāma Mūsā and others believed that Shaikh al-Jāwīsh, the editor of al-Liwā', was responsible for the poisonous exchange; but at least two contemporary scholars charge the Copts with responsibility.[43] It is true that the Coptic press was more vigorous in expressing Coptic demands at this time than in previous decades, and no doubt this was seen by many Muslims as provocative. In June 1908 a concerned group of Copts met in Cairo to protest al-Liwā''s hostile

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39. Egyptian Gazette, 12 June 1908, p.5.
40. Al-Liwā' was the newspaper of the National Party and al-Mu'ayyid of the Constitutional Reform party. The latter party had one Copt on its executive committee, 'Ilyās ᶜAwaḍ. Al-Mu'ayyid, which was edited by Shaikh ᶜAlī Yūsuf, was the old paper of Riyād Pasha. Some of the anti-Coptic articles appearing in al-Dustūr were written by ᶜAbbās Al-ᶜAqqād.
41. For a translation of one of these articles, see Alfred Cunningham, Today in Egypt (London 1912), pp.345-9.
42. Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭī, p.89.
43. Salama Musa, The Education of Salama Musa, p.49; Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭī, p.70; ᶜAbd al-Laṭīf Hamza, Qissat al-Sihāfa al-ᶜArabiyya fī Misr (Baghdad 1967), p.101.

tone, and many letters of complaint were sent to Gorst. A delegation was sent to the National Party, which was responsible for al-Liwā'; and, while many members were reportedly unhappy with al-Jāwīsh's articles, little was done to moderate them.[44]

The situation was not improved when Butrus Ghālī, a Coptic Cabinet Minister, was made Prime Minister in November 1908. He was not the first Christian to be appointed Prime Minister but he was both the first Copt and the first Christian to serve at such a singularly awkward time. He does not seem to have been imposed on the Khedive by the British; Gorst at first thought that Ghālī's religion was an insurmountable obstacle.[45] Khedive ʿAbbās persuaded Gorst that religion was not at issue, and that it was desirable to have an Egyptian, even a Christian Egyptian, rather than a Muslim Turk. Ghālī was competent and his relations with the Khedive were excellent.

Muslims were disturbed by the appointment.[47] Saʿd Zaghlūl wrote in his diary that he feared the press would make an issue of it and would thereby kindle accusations of religious fanaticism.[48] Curiously, al-Liwā' was fairly restrained in its comments but other newspapers, such as al-Dustūr, more than made up for its moderation.[49]

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44. Egyptian Gazette, 19 June 1908, p.3, 22nd June 1908, p.5.
45. Samir Seikaly, "Prime Minister and Assassin: Butrus Ghali and Wardani", Middle Eastern Studies 13 (1977), pp.115-7.
46. Seikaly thinks that Ghālī was chosen because both the Khedive and the British thought he was submissive and would be easy to manipulate. Ibid., pp.115-7.
47. Ronald Storrs, Orientations (London 1945), p.83.
48. Bahr, al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Hayāt, p.418.
49. Samir Seikaly, "The Copts under British Rule, 1882-1914", unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1967, p.147.

Two years after the appointment, a Muslim nationalist with close connections to the National Party,[50] one Wardānī by name, assassinated the Prime Minister. His reasons were mainly political. Butrus Ghālī had by 1910 a number of black marks against him: he had sat on the bench at the Dinshawī trial, he had signed the Sudan condominium agreement, he had revived press censorship, and he was then known to favour an extension of the Suez Canal concession.[51] Still, Copt-Muslim tensions, as developed and exploited by the press, created an atmosphere conducive to murder. The Muslim and nationalist press naturally described the crime as a political act; the Copts, just as naturally, saw it as a religious one.[52] Wardānī was, in fact, celebrated publicly not only as a nationalist but as a Muslim who had rid his people of an intolerably arrogant Christian.[53] Storrs, the Oriental Secretary, reported that groups of Muslims roamed the street singing about "Wardānī who killed the Nazarene", and he noted that the assassin had become a national hero.[54] While the nationalists were stressing Wardānī's political reasons to Europeans, they were, as K. Graham, the Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, noted, using the religious aspects of the case to work up Muslim feeling in native circles. He added that sympathy for Wardānī in the middle and lower classes had taken an anti-Christian and anti-Coptic turn. Graham

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50. FO.141/802, 81/pol./1910.
51. FO.371/890, 20791/5946/16.
52. Including al-Waṭan. Seikaly, The Copts Under British Rule, p.147.
53. FO.371/890, 20791/5946/16. The British, however, thought that Ghālī had been able to keep some of the more troublesomespirits in the Coptic community in check, and that Wardānī had done a disservice in removing this restraint. FO.371/111, 10869/5672/16.
54. Storrs, Orientations, p.84; FO.141/802, 81/pol./10.

clearly was concerned by the threat of Muslim-Copt violence, and he noted that there had been a few trivial attacks on Copts in Upper Egypt.[55] Gorst immediately added another Christian, Yūsuf Sābā, to the Cabinet to prove to Muslims, as he wrote in a letter to Cromer, that they had not gained a victory.[56] However, he chose a Christian of Syrian rather than Coptic extraction.

Coptic activists were appalled by the murder and were also upset by Gorst's contention that they had little support for their demands within the community, and so they called for a conference to discuss Coptic demands. The British reluctantly gave permission, and the conference convened in 'Asyūṭ in March 1911. Qalīnī Fahmī Pasha, a Coptic notable with close ties to the Palace, thought that the Khedive had encouraged the conference out of a desire to embarrass Gorst.[57] Many Copts who later entered the political arena were in attendance: Murqus Ḥannā, Tawfīq Dūs, 'Ilyās ʿAwaḍ, Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, Sinūt Ḥannā, Bushrā Ḥannā and George Khayyāṭ.[58] The conference, with strong backing from the Coptic press, presented a petition with its demands to the Khedive and the British. These demands were not new. The petition asked for better representation, equal access to civil service positions, the designation of Sunday as a holiday, equal access to state education and the provision of Christian religious instruction in state schools.[59]

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55. He felt that these attacks were greatly exaggerated by the Coptic press. FO.141/802, 81/pol./10.
56. Quoted by Mellini, Gorst, p.204.
57. Seikaly, "The Copts under British Rule", p.232.
58. Bushrā Ḥannā was Chairman, Tawfīq Dūs Secretary, and Sinūt Ḥannā Treasurer. Ramzī Tādrus, al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Qarn al-ʿIshrīn, vol.3, (Cairo 1911), p.88.
59. The Coptic Conference Held at Assiout on March 6, 7 and 8, 1911: the Speeches (no place, n.d.), American missionaries in 'Asyūṭ were generally supportive of Coptic demands. They were invited to attend the conference, but to the great relief of the Residency were told by the American Agent in Cairo not to attend. FO.371/113, 19118/19118/16.

Almost all the demands made centred around a desire that the state be a civil rather than a religious institution.

Not all Copts favoured the idea of a conference although their numbers were not the majority that al-Mu'ayyid claimed for them.[60] The Patriarch, who was 93 and senile, was persuaded by the government to issue a statement disapproving of the conference before it convened.[61] However, his Bishop in 'Asyūṭ, Makarios, a proponent of church reform and a less than obedient servant, opened the conference. No leading Cairene family seems to have taken part in the conference;[62] mainly Upper Egyptians were in attendance. Both Wīsā Wāṣif and Wāṣif Ghālī opposed the conference, and the latter made his objections public.[63] Wīsā felt that the British were the ones who had determined hiring practices in the civil service; they, and not the Muslims, were the real enemy.[64]

Most elements of the press resented the conference and the demands that came out of it.[65] Al-'Ahālī, the organ of the Prime Minister, referred to the congress as a religious conspiracy;[66] and other newspapers accused the Copts of being the willing instruments of British policy.[67] One unpleasant repercussion was a riot in 'Asyūṭ in April; there may have been other incidents of violence as well.[68]

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60. Tāriq al-Bishrī, "Misr al-Ḥadītha Bain 'Aḥmad w-al-Masīḥ", al-Kātib 109 (1970), p.115.
61. FO.371/1111,18689/5672/16.
62. Seikaly, "The Copts under British Rule", p.232.
63. Bishrī, al-Kātib 109, p.115.
64. Bishrī, al-Kātib 111 (1970), pp.127-8, quoting an article by Wīsā Wāsif in La Bourse Egyptienne, 12 May 1922.
65. Alfred Cunningham, Egypt Today, pp.92-7, translates and prints articles from the press.
66. See al-'Ahālī, 7 and 8 March 1911: quoted in FO.371/1111,10869/5672/16.
67. FO.371/1111,13807/5672/16.
68. FO.371/1111,10869/5672/16.

With discreet government sponsorship,[69] a counter-congress was held to refute the sectarian bias of the 'Asyūṭ conference. Moderate nationalists of the 'Umma group were involved in the conference, which was held in Heliopolis. The more extreme nationalists of al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī remained aloof; their leader, Muḥammad Farīd, saw the congress as an attempt by the British, who were hiding behind the Egyptian government, to divide the Egyptian people.[70] The congress was billed as an Egyptian and not a Muslim conference and, while some Copts did attend,[71] Coptic demands were rejected out of hand.

Muslim delegates seem to have been very fearful of Coptic designs. The congress' Organizing Committee reported their conclusion that the Copts were planning to form "a separate nation for themselves", and that they were relying on manufactured grievances to enable them, with British help, to gain precedence over the Muslim majority.[72] The body of this report, read by Lutfī al-Sayyid, deserves quotation:

> ....the principle is found that every country should have an established church and that such a religion will be that of the government or the majority....that a state should have more than one religion is perfectly unthinkable and it would be absurd to admit that religious minorities can exist animated by political ambitions toward the exercising of public rights other than those of an essentially religious nature that are guaranteed by freedom of worship. The religion of the Egyptian people is Islam. For Islam is both the religion of

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69. Riyāḍ Pasha, the president of the conference, kept in close touch with the Minister of the Interior. Almost the entire conference consisted of set speeches which were approved beforehand. FO.371/1113, 18097/16024/16.
70. ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Rafiʿī, Muḥammad Farīd (Cairo 1948), p.244.
71. The only Copt to give a speech was Gabriel Khalīl, and he spoke on the protection and encouragement of Egyptian industry. FO/371/1113, 18097/16024/16.
72. Minutes of the Proceedings of the First Egyptian Conference Assembled at Heliopolis, 29 April to 4 May 1911 (Alexandria 1911), pp.5-6.

> the government and that of the majority. This fact....dominates the discussions relative to civil interests that might arise between the majority and minority in politics. In short, there is no doubt that political strife between individuals and parties should be based on their respective interests and not upon their religious beliefs.[73]

Delegates agreed that Islam must continue to be the official religion of Egypt. As Seikaly commented, "If the common theme of the Coptic congress was a plea for justice, that of the Egyptian congress was an insistence upon the inviolable Islamic nature of the state".[74] Delegates conceded that religion should not be a factor in public employment, but at the same time insisted that certain administrative posts, like that of the governorship of a province, were not appropriate for a Coptic occupant.[75] One motion put before the congress called for an investigation into the reasons for the excessive numbers of Copts in the civil service. Another insisted that the Copts enjoyed too large a share of government educational facilities; and a third condemned Treasury grants to Coptic institutions.[76] The conference also objected to the Coptic plea for proportional representation because it would make the Copts a political minority whose interests differed from those of the majority.[77] To the Copts, it was already clear that their interests had diverged. Despite these conclusions, the conference was relatively restrained, if only due to the co-operation of Gorst and the Egyptian government.[78] On a concluding note, the conference asked the Copts to return to their former

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73. Ibid., p.6.
74. Seikaly, "The Copts under British Rule", p.317.
75. The Proceedings of the First Egyptian Conference, pp.10-13.
76. FO.371/1113, 18097/16024/16.
77. The Proceedings of the First Egyptian Conference p.6.
78. Mellini, Gorst, p.227.

attitude and also begged the Muslims to forget everything that had transpired. Both were asked to look to their common interests.[79]

In 1911 Gorst, who was hated by many Copts, was replaced as High Commissioner by Kitchener. The latter had an awe-inspiring reputation; the Copts were ready to respect him, and they certainly hoped that he would prove more amenable to their demands. They were far more welcoming of this appointment than the Muslim press. Kitchener was not able to meet Coptic requests, but for some reason community activists did not construe this as a bias in favour of Muslims. Kitchener was able to calm the troubled sea of intercommunal relations, and the polemics diminished.[80] The declaration of a British Protectorate and the start of World War I put a final clamp on both sectarian and nationalist political activity until the end of the decade.

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79. FO.371/1113, 16024/16024/16.
80. Severianus, "Les Coptes de l'Egypte Musulmane", Etudes Méditerranéenes 6 (1959), p.80.

CHAPTER ONE

COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION

A. The Church

By this century, the church was a crumbling fortress, less and less able to protect those who sheltered within its walls. It had lost many of its administrative functions and both corruption and incompetence had left it open to the depredations of laymen and outside predators. The church, however, remained an important element in the lives of many Copts; for centuries it had been the one institution which represented the community and served as its refuge. Many still gave it their unquestioning support, while others saw it as capable of renewal. Even those who had lost some or all of their faith were slow to cut their communal bonds. This lingering sense of communal identity, as much imposed by Muslims as deliberately retained by Copts, meant that the church was able to preserve some independence of action, a remarkable feat given how little agreement there was as to who should hold the balance of power within the community.

The unity of the church was broken first by missionaries. Some Copts left the Orthodox fold for these new Christian sects, while others were stirred, from the mid-nineteenth century, to demand reform in their own church. The latter had two goals: the correction of abuses such as simony, and the acquisition of a voice in church affairs. They saw the church as backward, corrupt and lazy; an ancient and malfunctioning organization in need of a push into the twentieth century. They wanted to limit clerical responsibility in those affairs of the community which were not strictly religious or theological, and they wished to build schools, hospitals and seminaries. They hoped to better

educate the clergy and improve the organization of charity. Both had an important bearing on the community's well-being and future.

Most of those supporting reform were drawn from the educated middle class and the landed gentry. They had been exposed, in some degree, to Western thinking, some had even abandoned Egyptian culture in favour of European. Their aim, therefore, was to make the church operate like some kind of Western parliamentary system with all decisions and offices subject to the will of the people. This is an odd model to choose for a church whose very survival says something about the aptness of its ways, and it may show the influence of American Presbyterian missionaries whose own church functioned along reasonably democratic lines.

The clergy, of course, had once controlled practically all areas of life in the community: religion, justice, charity, education, etc. Their expertise was increasingly being questioned and their jurisdiction eroded. They understandably felt threatened by the considerable respect granted to this new breed of layman.[1] Whatever the reformers liked to think, the clergy were not all corrupt, unthinking and reactionary. Of course, they were interested in protecting their personal power, but many also hoped, by maintaining the church's ancient arrangements, to preserve the community's cohesion and religious character, for therein lay safety. They had powerful friends both in the Palace,[2] and among the lay élite. The latter, drawn in past times from high officialdom,

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1. The rivalry was fuelled partly by the fact that the clergy came from poorer families than did the reformers and resented the opportunities and advantages of the latter. Samir Seikaly, 'The Copts under British Rule, 1882-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1967, pp.73-4.
2. Patriarch Cyril, who died in 1927, may have feared that progressive opinions would earn him the enmity of the Palace, rumoured to be responsible for the suspicious death of his reforming predecessor. Ibid., 71.

probably had traditionally allied itself with the higher clergy to the benefit of both, and sometimes, no doubt almost incidentally, to that of the community as well. Both were helped by the fact that the great mass of Copts, although often the victims of clerical waste and corruption, had a tendency, born of long habit, to follow the lead of their clergy rather than the latter's new rival. Not all the clergy, however, opposed the reform movement. Those who supported it were admittedly few, but their influence was disproportionately great because they fragmented the clerical monolith.[3]

The rigidity of both the clergy and the reformers embittered the conflict and made a solution all but impossible; ultimately it harmed a system which both were trying to preserve, however different their means. Various outsiders were sometimes drawn into the conflict to help settle it. The government the Palace and the British all had important roles to play, only the last were consistently in favour of reform.[4] They were also the most reluctant to intervene.

1. The Majlis Millī's Struggle for Power

In 1874, the government bowed to popular pressure and established a Coptic Lay Council (Majlis Millī) with the right to participate in church affairs. Clerical opposition, however, was constant, and the Council functioned only sporadically. A new Majlis was elected in in 1883, and a new law gave it significant power, the exercise of which was successfully blocked by the clergy. Two later laws, dated 1908

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3. Among its ecclesiastical supporters, whose reform activities sometimes won them excommunication or banishment, were Metropolitan Makarios of 'Asyūṭ, the Bishop of Manfalūṭ and 'Abū Tīj, and the priests Murqus Sergius and 'Ibrāhīm Lūqā.

4. The enthusiasm particularly of British churchmen and missionaries for Coptic church reform led the Coptic clergy to suspect that all British interference was ultimately designed to win converts to Anglicanism.

and 1912, weakened the Council,[5] but also enabled it meet regularly since they assured the Patriarch of a majority in all its deliberations.

Reformers always played an important role in the Council but only came to dominate it from the late 1920s. It was the chief mechanism by which they sought to gain control of the community. Because Council elections were held only in Cairo and the Council sat in that city, Cairenes played a disproportionate role in the Council's life. That body would probably have been more conservative and more genuinely representative had voting been by diocese. Some Council members were in fact bound by the horizon of the community, but many had wider interests and were involved, for example, in national politics as well. An advantage was seen in electing politicians and high officials to the Majlis; they could then represent the Council to their party and the government.[6] The additional public exposure brought by Council membership was probably useful to many Coptic politicians, particularly those representing Cairene Coptic constituencies.

At the heart of the dispute between the clergy and key members of the Council was the control of monastic endowment (waqf) revenues. Over 5,000 feddans had been endowed for the particular use of the seven surviving monasteries, which were charged with the responsibility for only about one hundred monks and an income in 1926 of £E300,000.[7] The

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5. The 1883 law gave the Council control of monastic endowments. The Council was never able to gain de facto control from the Patriarch and in 1908 lost de jure control as well. The 1912 law gave Patriarchal appointees a majority on the Council and reduced the number of elected members. It also gave the Council control of those non-monastic endowments in Cairo.
6. The Wafdist politician, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, recalls that he was asked to run for election to the Council in 1939 by the organization's Vice-President al-Minyāwī and other Coptic notables. Interview, 13 June 1979.
7. Sūryāl Jirjis Sūryāl, in a petition to the Senate, noted that there were less than 200 monks in 1906, a figure which decreased to about a hundred by 1926. Misr, 18 March 1944, p.3; 20 March 1944, p.3; 21 March 1944, p.3.

Abbots disposed of huge sums as they saw fit, while rumours of waste and wrong-doing abounded. For example, in 1919-20 Dair al-Muḥarraq earned £E.1.5 million in cotton sales, a sum which seemingly disappeared into the void.[8] Monastic incomes were not even spent on the welfare of their intended beneficiaries, the monks, let alone on the entire Coptic community. The monks lived in dire poverty and received little, if any, education; only the poorest of the poor and those avoiding conscription saw monastic life as a refuge of any sort. Many laymen were interested in helping the monks, but they could do nothing without money. These large revenues, then, were the key to the success of lay reform plans. The Council, with the backing of many Copts, wished to establish a system of accountability by supervising incomes and expenditures. Some Copts despaired of this solution and advocated more extreme solutions like the dissolution of all monasteries or supervision of monastic endowments by the Ministry of (Muslim) Endowments.[9]

By 1926, the reform movement had gathered such speed that its opponents could only interrupt and not break its momentum. The two Coptic newspapers, various Coptic societies, the national and local diocesan lay councils, the latter of which functioned primarily as personal status courts, were all demending reform. Understandably, they focused on changing the Majlis charter to give it control of the endowments.

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8. Miṣr, 23 March 1944, p.3. The Abbot of Dair al-Muḥarraq was noted for his investments in land. His lack of concern for the welfare of his monks caused repeated revolts in the monastery from the 1920s.
9. Among those who proposed this were Murquṣ Fahmī, a speaker at the 1911 Assiout conference; Nāshid Ḥannā, a member of the Assiout Lay Council; and the newspaper al-Siyāsa. See The Coptic Conference Held at Assiout on March 6, 7 and 8, 1911, no place, n.d., p.57; Miṣr, 10 July 1926, pp.1, 3.

Sūryāl Jirjis Sūryāl opened the campaign in the Senate in June 1926, by pointing to the many petitions of complaint against clerical mismanagement that the Senate had received. He then moved for a return to the Majlis law of 1883 and the abolution of the 1908 and 1912 laws.[10] He asked for a Council membership of 24, all of whom would be chosen by an electorate of all adult male Copts. Bishop Lūkās, a Senator appointed to represent the church, argued that the Council already had enough authority; the ecclesiastics, by virtue of their vaunted position, were entitled to exercise the greater share of power. His argument was not persuasive, and the draft law was passed to the Judiciary Committee in July.

Only two members of the higher clergy supported the reform, the Metropolitan of 'Asyūt, and the Bishop of Manafalūt and 'Abu Tīj.[11] The rest opposed any reduction in clerical privileges, and none more so than Yu'ānnis, the Metropolitan of Alexandria. In August the Patriarch submitted a petition, apparently written by Yu'ānnis, to the Senate objecting to Sūryāl's plans and presenting the case for ecclesiastical supervision of monastic endowments.

The Coptic press printed pages and pages of letters and telegrams supporting Sūryāl and was unrestrained in its criticism of the clergy. One article in Misr, a daily Coptic paper, accused the clergy of being so busy selling feddans that they served Mammon and not God.[12] Other newspapers, including al-Muqaṭṭam, Wādī al-Nīl and the Liberal Constitutionalist al-Siyāsa, praised Sūryāl's plan.

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10. Curiously, Sūryāl was a member of the royalist al-'Ittiḥād party and yet here, as well as in the election of Yu'ānnis as Patriarch two years later, opposed the wishes of the King. FO 141/819, 17612/6/25.
11. Misr, 3 July 1926, p.2.
12. Misr, 14 August 1926, p.1. Another article accused the Bishops of killing the Copts as the Jews had killed Christ. Misr, 16 November 1926, p.1.

The Judiciary Committee, apparently accepting Lūkās' advice that the need to end a quarrel which had been going on since 1883 was not critical, did not approve the draft law until 1927. The Bishop had tried to postpone consideration of the Committee's report until yet the following session, while Sūryāl, in some trepidation lest the government fall, had been urging speed for months.

The merits and demerits of the draft law, which gave the Majlis the right to supervise endowments, schools, churches, societies, monasteries, personal status and the Coptic press, were not debated in either Chamber. Some Senators tried to send the bill back to committee on a technical point, but failed. The coalition government forced the bill through Parliament and a large majority in each house voted in its favour before the end of the session. It became law in July 1927.[13] All Copts, except the absent Bishop Lūkās, voted for the law; curiously, Wafdist Copts played only a small part in the debate. If Patriarch Cyril had not been senile and ill,[14] the reformers might not have been so successful. No one was firmly in control of the community, and this gave both free rein to clerical abuse and an opportunity to remedy the problem. The British, although they approved of this project, did not intervene in its behalf.[15]

Unfortunately, the new law was ignored by the clergy and therefore did not settle the problem of monastic endowments. In 1928, the Coptic

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13. For the relevant debates, see Senate Debates, 28 June 1926 and 30 May 1927; Chamber Debates, 25 June 1927.
14. He was said to have fallen under the influence of a relative who was embezzling church funds. FO 141/686, 8609/7/26.
15. Curiously, the clergy were claiming that they had British support. FO 141/686, 8609/7/26/

Minister of Agriculture, Nakhla al-Muṭīʿī, suggested to the bemused Prime Minister the creation of a joint lay-clerical committee responsible for the endowments and to the Lay Council as one possible solution.[16] The Prime Minister, so despairing that he overlooked his fear that the Wafd would choose to profit from the expected opposition of both reformers and clergy, approved the plan. Palace pressure may have been behind his decision.[17] The joint committee, designed to have a pro-clerical majority, was announced by Royal Decree in December 1928, but was still not functioning by the following spring due to the seeming inability of the two sides to co-operate at any level.

Other problems, which had nothing to do with the major one of endowments, presented themselves with monotonous regularity. The imposition of a Bishop of unsavoury reputation[18] on al-Minyā without first taking the customary poll of local opinion, brought 2,000 Minyans to a protest meeting in May 1930[19] and a flood of telegrams opposing the Bishops's investiture to the Palace.[20] The Lay Council threw its weight behind the protestors and declared the investiture null and void. A second problem arose in the staffing of the Patriarchate; both the Patriarch and the Council wished to dismiss an individual of the others's appointing. One was accused by the Council of encroaching on its prerogatives, and the other by the Patriarch of financial incompetence.[21]

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16. FO 141/685, 8424/59/28; 8424/78/28.
17. In a Cabinet meeting on 27 October, the King announced he would not leave the room until the Cabinet agreed to changes in the administration of Coptic endowments. The King had pressed for this for some time, but the Prime Minister had insisted that they would only reap criticism by doing so. After the meeting Mahmūd threatened to resign partly over the endowment issue and partly over the matter of appointing Ṣidqī Auditor-General. FO.407/207 No.45, Mr. Hoare to Lord Cushendun, 28 October 1928.
18. FO.141/758, 92/32/31.
19. Miṣr, 16 May 1930, p.5.
20. D.W., ʿAbdīn Palace Archives, Tawā'if Dīniyya 1.
21. As the Residency pointed out, the latter's only crime was acting in the interests of the Council and "thus embarrassing the Patriarch in his disposal of Coptic Church funds". FO.141/758, 92/9/31.

The Patriarch believed that the solution to his problems lay in a return to the Council law of 1912. It is possible that, through his old ally the Palace, he pressed the government to act because rumours circulated that the Council would be reconstituted to make it more amenable to the wishes of the Patriarch and the Prime Minister.[22] The Residency, asked to intervene by both the reformers and the Anglican Bishop in Egypt, did not do so until 1931. Sir Percy Loraine, the High Commissioner, believed that his scope for action was limited,[23] but he finally asked his Oriental Secretary, Walter Smart, to impress upon Prime Minister Ṣidqī the desirability of avoiding retrograde measures. With British approval, Ṣidqi asked Nakhla al-Muṭīʿī to mediate.[24] The latter accepted this thankless task and, after informing the Majlis that the government had no intention of altering its charter,[25] worked out a compromise on some issues in June.

The Council of Ministers accepted the compromise solution which (1) left the Bishop of al-Minyā in place and thereby confirmed the Patriarch's right to invest Bishops; (2) dismissed the official accused of incompetence by the Patriarch and suggested a Lay Council member to replace him; and (3) ordered the Patriarch's appointee to restrict his duties to those of a private secretary. Smart construed this as a significant victory for the Majlis Millī.[26] The Majlis apparently

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22. FO.371/758, 92/9/31. As Ṣidqī himself noted, the Coptic reform party was full of his political opponents. FO.407/217. No.17. Sir Percy Loraine to Sir John Simon, 16 January 1933.
23. FO.371/15409, J47/47/16.
24. FO.141/758, 92/9/31.
25. Egyptian Gazette, 7 January 1931, p.5.
26. FO.141/758, 92/9/31.

disagreed for it suddenly withdrew its consent.[27] In retaliation, Patriarch Yu'annis first threatened to retire to a monastery, leaving the community to wallow in its confusion, and then in February he changed all the locks at the Patriarchate to prevent entry.

Loraine emphatically wished that the Patriarch would carry out his threat. He was also tired of the reformers "trying to get their battles fought by someone else...,"[28] and he believed that it was undesirable to espouse their cause too openly. The Foreign Office, however, wanted him to intervene and even suggested that he press the King.[29] Loraine resisted this proposal, explaining that British representations had been frequent and adequate.[30] The Prime Minister, he reported, had dropped any idea of dissolving the present Majlis. British intervention as well as communal resistance had another effect: the Egyptian government finally instructed the Patriarch to withdraw the new Bishop from al-Minyā. This would have been a significant victory for the Lay Council had not the Patriarch refused to co-operate.[31]

Twice in 1932, the Holy Synod petitioned Sidqī to weaken the Majlis,[32] and once in 1933 the Patriarch, through Tawfīq Dūs,[33] presented a similar plan. Sidqī liked the latter proposal but, upon consideration,

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27. It was primarily upset over government confirmation of the troublesome Bishop. The Council claimed that it did not want to set a precedent for government intervention, despite the fact that some of its members had been eager for British intervention. FO.141/758, 92/14/31.
28. FO.141/758, 92/9/31.
29. Murray in the Foreign Office minuted in March that the British could intervene under the third Reserved Point but should do so only if they could be inconspicuous. Henderson was the one suggesting pressure on the Palace. FO.371/15409, J663/47/16.
30. For example, he persuaded Sidqī to prevent the excommunication of the Patriarch's bête noire, 'Ibrāhīm Lūqā. See also FO.371/15409, J1293/47/16.
31. FO.141/758, 92/30/31.
32. Misr, 10 November 1932, p.3.
33. By this time, Dūs had replaced Qalīnī Fahmī as the chief intermediary between the Patriarch and the Palace. Qalīnī was making his rounds spitefully referring to the Patriarch as "that animal". FO.141/686, 8609/57/29.

suggested a solution that was less drastic but would still leave the Patriarch in control.[34] Loraine, maintaining his belief that the laity and not the clergy required protection, informed Sidqī that he saw no justification for a change in the Council composition. The Prime Minister replied that the chaos caused by the perennial quarrel about the spending of church income was reason enough.[35] Sidqī's scheme was not to be gifted with success; the Foreign Office, like Loraine, found it unacceptable and had its disapproval voiced to the King.[36]

In another attempt to solve the problem of endowments, yet another joint lay-clerical committee was formed in 1937. It made as little progress as the old committee,[37] and in June the Holy Synod gave up and announced that it would retain control of the endowments. At the same time, the Lay Council reaffirmed that it regarded the 1928 degree setting up the first joint committee as invalid.[38]

The luck of the reformers changed when in 1944 they were able to replace the late Patriarch Yu'ānnis with the reform-minded Makarios. The latter suggested that the endowments be handed to a committee which would be elected by the Majlis and approved by the Patriarch. The income would be devoted first to improving monastic conditions and then to whatever other projects the Patriarch thought worthwhile.[39] The reformers had no objection to this. They were more interested in overseeing the accounts and determining that the money was spent wisely than in choosing how the money would be spent.

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34. FO.141/749, 20/1/33.
35. Ṣidqī was particularly annoyed because the clergy were no longer being paid and the government had had to grant money for their support. FO.407/217, No.7. Sir Percy Loraine to Sir John Simon, 16 January 1933.
36. FO.141/749, 20/8/33.
37. Misr, 9 August 1937, p.1. This committee has ceased meeting in 1930.
38. It did so on the grounds that the decree had not been submitted to a parliament and contradicted the 1927 law which had. al-'Ahrām, 18 June 1937, PPF.
39. FO.371/41316, J906/14/16.

Makarios' proposal aroused a storm of protest among the clergy who sent a delegation in May to the Minister of the Interior to enlist his support. The delegation failed, and the Wafd Government confirmed Lay Council control of monastic endowments. The Wafd had no reason to contradict the expressed wish of the head of the community and was perhaps concerned to placate, at least partially, those Copts inclined to follow the Coptic politician Makram ʿUbaid out of the party.

Meeting in the wake of this division, the Holy Synod determined that the Patriarch had violated church law.[40] A delegation was sent to the British Embassy to plead their cause and to express the fear that the government might attempt to overcome their resistance by force. They apparently overcame this fear; a Lay Council committee, sent to take a preliminary look at the Waqf accounts, found the Abbots very unco-operative.

The clergy only needed patience for by July the honeymoon was over. The Majlis thought it could dictate and, once the Patriarch tired of this, quarrelling began.[41] Makarios soon came under the influence of his fellow ecclesiastics.[42] Annoyed with the Lay Council, he withdrew to a monastery in August and did not return for two months. Away from lay influence, he lost any remaining reformist tendencies. Inevitably, his return did not improve the situation; the Council, with much of the community behind it, clung tenaciously to its right to control monastic endowments.[43] Makarios asked the government for a decree proclaiming his jurisdiction

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40. By Fitna. Misr, 30 May 1944, p.2.
41. Interview, Iris Habīb al-Masrī, church historian and daughter of an influence Coptic official of the time, 24 August 1979.
42. FO.371/45931, J2266/10/16.
43. A meeting of 1,000 people held by the Tawfīq Society, a Coptic benevolent association, in June voted to back the Lay Council. The latter also had the support of the local Lay Councils. Misr, 16 March 1946, p.1.

over secular and financial church affairs, but he died before it could be issued.[44]

His successor, Patriarch Yūsāb, who was elected with the support of reform elements, also agreed to Majlis supervision of endowments and then changed his mind after his election. As always, the problem was partly due to the Council's persistent lack of tact in trying to dictate to the Patriarch.[45] In 1947, the community split over the appointment of a foreign Anglican as instructor at the seminary. Half the Lay Council opposed the appointment and resigned.[46] This, in turn, generated a new problem: the Patriarch wanted elections for an entirely new Majlis scheduled while the Vice-President and effective head of the Council, al-Minyāwī, held that the law only allowed for by-elections to fill the vacant seats.[47] Several months later, the issue had still not been decided; the Council could not function and there was a backlog of personal status appellate cases. In disgust, the Patriarch left Cairo and refused to return. It was rumoured that he had left it up to the Council of Ministers to settle the affair.[48]

Patriarch Yūsāb appears to have been a weak individual who was prey to the arguments of anyone more forceful than he. Al-Minyāwī and his supporters merely compounded the problem by splitting the Council over a matter as unimportant as an instructor at the seminary. Even loyal backers like Miṣr began to suggest the need for a change in the Council's ways,[49] and some even proposed a more drastic reallocation of duties.[50]

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44. Sergius, in the name of the Acting Patriarch, was still trying to obtain this decree in March 1946. Miṣr, 18 June 1945, p.2.
45. Interview, Iris al-Masrī, 24 August 1979.
46. Including Habīb al-Maṣrī, Rāghib 'Iskander, Tawfīq Dūs and Murād Wahbah.
47. By law, the Patriarch was President of the Council. Miṣr, 5 June 1947, p.1.
48. Miṣr, 28 November 1947, p.1.
49. Miṣr, 2 July 1948, p.1.
50. I.e., the Coptic Unity Society. Miṣr, 5 November 1947, p.3.

Again in 1949, Council elections were delayed due to an attempt by the Patriarch to restrict the electorate. Hoping to force the issue, he first declared in November that the Council was no longer legally constituted and its decisions therefore void, and then in February that he would retire to a monastery if the government did not act on his request. The government, hoping to solve at least this kind of problem permanently, had Parliament amend the Council charter to give the Minister of the Interior the power to appoint a commission to replace the Council until elections could be held. In addition, all Council decisions from the end of its term in October were validated.[51] The Commission appointed by the Ministry had a clerical bias, and this drove al-Minyāwī and some other Copts on the Commission to withhold their participation.[52] However, the Commission held elections that summer (1950) and the reformers won a majority.

Yūsāb's pontificate was perhaps even more troubled than that of his predecessors. Accusations of clerical corruption and incompetence grew more and more frequent as the Patriarch came under the influence of his valet who was reportedly selling bishoprics for £E5,000, and was perhaps collecting this fee at some later date from endowment revenues.[53] As many as 16 of the 19 episcopal appointments made by Yūsāb may have been sold in this fashion.[54] Finally, in 1955, the clergy and the government agreed to the Patriarch's deposition.

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51. Chamber Debates, ninth session, 6 March 1950.
52. Misr was also unhappy with the Committee's composition. Misr. 2 and 10 May 1950, p.1.
53. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, the Ambassador to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 7 March 1953.
54. Otto Meinardus, Christian Egypt: Faith and Life (Cairo 1970), p.42.

2. Patriarchal Elections

Another sign of weakness was that there was no accepted method of choosing a Patriarch. This was not a new problem; in past centuries, a preference was voiced but not always followed for monastic candidates who were usually, but not always, elected by an electorate whose composition varied.[55] There were three Partiarchal elections in the first half of this century; all were controversial, and each time the problem was different. The variety in custom gave each side in an election dispute a number of precedents on which to draw. Essentially, these three elections provided additional opportunities for the reformers to attempt to take control of the community.

In 1926, the age and senility of Patriarch Cyril drove the reformers to argue with the Synod over whose right it was to appoint a deputy to act for the Patriarch. By tradition, it was the right of the latter two; the reformers, fearing the appointment of the tough and reactionary Metropolitan Yu'ānnis, argued for the people.[56] Nothing happened due to the fact that the government, whose responsibility it was to confirm such an appointment refused to take sides. In August 1927, the quarrel became acute when Cyril died. The Synod asked Yu'ānnis to serve as Acting Patriarch while the reform party, hoping to prevent him from using the office to his advantage, pushed for an immediate election.[57] However, the reformers first wanted to change the election regulations, set in 1908, which gave the government the right to choose the electors.

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55. Ibid., pp.90-1.
56. Knowing that they were in the wrong, they asked Parliament to grant the Lay Council the right to appoint the Deputy. Parliament declined.
57. FO.141/685, 8424/51/27.

After long argument, the reformers failed, and in 1928 the government did exactly as they feared, packing the assembly with electors who were not necessarily even Orthodox Copts.[58]

The reformers' candidate for Partiarch was Yūhannā Salāma, deputy (wakīl) of the Khartoum diocese, who had not only quarrelled with the Bishop, but had been married in his youth.[59] Although, therefore not a favourite with the Synod, he was popular with Copts in the Sudan and the British, who supported his progressive ideas. British approval may have led the reformers to expect British help; it may equally have harmed Yūhannā in the King's eyes, and may help to explain the latter's preference for Yu'ānnis.[60] King Fu'ad was eager to settle the election so that a new Metropolitan could be named to Ethiopia,[61] and so he called on two Coptic politicians, Qualīnī Fahmī and Tawfīq Dūs, to help secure the speedy election of Yu'ānnis. In fact, almost all Coptic politicians became involved in various ad hoc attempts to resolve differences.

Many Copts detested Yu'ānnis, and the Coptic press was full of articles attacking him. In December 1927, an illegally constituted assembly of 260 people representing Lay Councils and notables, elected Yūhannā Salāma Partiarch, and asked the government to confirm their choice.[62] The legitimate Nominations Committee condemned the meeting

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58. FO.141/758, 92/5/31.
59. FO.371/20129, J166/166/16.
60. Interview, Iris al-Masrī, 24 August 1979.
61. Only the Partiarch could consecrate a Metropolitan, but the King feared that the Ethiopians would take advantage of the stalemate and name an Ethiopian Metropolitan. Qalīnī Fahmī, Mudhakkirāt, vol.2 (Cairo 1944), p.111.
62. There is some confusion as to whether this was an election or a nomination. The Residency described it as the former. Misr, however, used both "tarshīh" (nomination) and "'intikhāb" (election) to describe the same act. Judging from the fuss the meeting created, the British interpretation was correct. FO.141/685, 8424/59/28; 8424/78/28; Misr, 16, 17, 19 and 20 December 1927, p.1. The government, due to countervailing pressures, delayed confirmation of Yu'ānnis' appointment as Acting Partiarch until just after this meeting.

while the Majlis Millī applauded it and requested the British to block any government decision against Salāma.[63] The British were aware of the strong clerical opposition to Salāma and, while sympathetic, decided against intervention. They did act to secure the reform party a royal audience, but this did not bear fruit.[64]

The lack of agreement on a draft election law continued to delay the election. The government was reluctant to decide the matter and so continued to prolong Yu'ānnis' appointment as Acting Patriarch, thereby inevitably strengthening his hand. Finally, the government set up an assembly of 96 clerics and laymen, who were individually informed of the King's wishes by the energetic Tawfīq Dūs. Acting in deference to those wishes, the assembly elected Yu'ānnis Partiarch in December 1928 by a vote of ninety-one to five. Both the manner of his election and his subsequent behaviour created doubts about his willingness and ability to protect the community.

The course of the second Partiarchical election ran no more smoothly, although the initial developments were encouraging. When Yu'ānnis died in 1942, Yūsāb, Metropolitan of Jirjā, was elected Acting Patriarch with little opposition. Even more surprising was the rapidity with which the Majlis and Synod agreed on new election regulations. These latter established an electorate of the clergy, the educated and the well-to-do. If not widely representative of the community, it at least was not a body that could be packed.[65] Misr happily described the new regulations as giving the community the right to elect its highest religious official, vox populi vox Dei.[66]

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63. FO.141/685, 8424/51/27.
64. FO.141/685, 8424/70/27.
65. Ultimately 3,580 electors qualified. Egyptian Gazette, 4 February 1944, p.3.
66. Misr, 17 August 1942, p.1.

The problem this time occurred over the question of electing a monk. The new law required it; however, an explanatory memorandum issued with the law seemed to allow exceptions. Since rival sides could quote the article or the memorandum, the debate grew lively. Both the reformers and the clergy favoured monastic candidates initially; each group later split internally on the issue.

Unfortunately, the only monastic candidate put forward was a former government official named Wadīʿ Saʿīd. Having taken orders only recently, his timing scandalized many; but he did have the support of certain reform elements, including members of the Majlis.[67] Metropolitan Yūsāb was the main contender on the other side, and he had the support of several important Coptic politicians. Misr published articles on all the candidates and at least simulated neutrality; the British felt that the paper actually favoured the election of a Bishop.[68] Yūsāb also had the support of al-Muqattam.

Letters advocating the election of Makarios, dredged up from the last election, began to appear in Misr. His great age was a discouraging factor, but some apparently saw him as a good man who could pave the way for a genuine monastic candidate at some not too distant date.[69] The Wafdist al-Misri backed Makarios.[70]

The election was delayed because the Synod refused to recognize Wadīʿ as a monk.[71] In deference to this, the Nominations Committee withdrew him from the list of candidates in July 1943. Throughout

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67. He had led an exemplary and celibate life before becoming a monk. Interview, Iris al-Masrī, 24 August 1979.
68. FO.371/35530, J1217/2/16.
69. Interview, Iris al-Masrī, 24 August 1979.
70. The Wafd may have supported Makarios because its opponents were backing Yūsāb. See FO.371/35530, J1217/2/16.
71. Misr, 1 November 1943, p.3.

the autumn, the Lay Council insisted that Wadīᶜ was a legitimate nominee, whereas Bishops were not. Eventually, the Council was forced to give way on both points; without Wadīᶜ, it was silly to insist on a monk.

The disappointed Council swung its weight behind Makarios. One clear sign of the times was that all the nominees promised reform and, in the final weeks before the election, contention rested on which candidate was the most progressive. Makarios' commitment to reform went back to at least the early 1920s, and he, perhaps accordingly, was elected in January 1944.

Less than two years later, Makarios died. The community, arguing for some months over the advantage of monastic candidates, finally agreed in March 1946 to strike the clause demanding the election of a monk from the regulations. Another problem, raised by the last election, occurred over the question of whose right it was to validate a nominee.[72]

Yūsāb Wadīᶜ, and one other candidate were approved by the Nominations Committee in April; and the election was set for May. The influential Coptic writer, Salāma Mūsā, came out in support of Yūsāb in Misr. As Mūsā pointed out, a Bishop might be expected to have more administrative and worldly knowledge than a monk,[73] given prevailing monastic educational standards. Of course, Wadīᶜ was exceptional for a monk, but he may have lost supporters due to a suspicion that he would encounter problems with the Synod if elected. Yūsāb also had the support of over half the Lay Council, and he finally was elected Patriarch in the least controversial of the three elections. He was helped by a strike which kept many

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72. The Lay Council was claiming this right. Misr, 5 March 1946, p.1.
73. Misr, 16 April 1946, p.1.

electors housebound because his supporter, General Basilī Sidqī, arranged for army lorries to take other supporters to the polls.[74]

3. Conclusion

Events in the Coptic community mirrored a similar ferment in the Muslim community, and periodic attempts were made to reform various Islamic institutions.[75] The government had always had more control over the Muslim religious establishment than it had over the Copt, but its power over the latter grew. Partly this was due to the fact that the government was increasingly treating the Copts as individual citizens rather than members of a corporate body with rights and duties of its own.[75a] In addition, the government benefited, albeit sometimes reluctantly, from the stalemate between laymen and clergy.

It was, of course, not unusual for the government to intervene in the internal affairs of the community, nor for the various factions in a communal dispute to ask for government support.[76] What was new was the number of both Copts involved and outsiders whose help could be sought; the British, the Cabinet and the Palace were at times the object of appeal.

The Patriarch was a public official, subject at a minimum to government confirmation. The state had the authority to determine how power would be divided in the community and which group would

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74. Interview, Iris al-Maṣrī, 24 August 1979.
75. The passage of the 1927 Majlis Millī law coincided with Parliament's assumption of control over the affairs of al-'Azhar and its satellite schools. In addition, the Qādī school was reorganized and suggestions to reform Islamic personal status law and abolish private endowments were put forward. FO.141/566, 17008/108/27.
75a. E. Kedourie, "Parallel Comments about Iraq", in The Chatham House Version, op.cit., p.306.
76. See Meinardus, Christian Egypt, pp.355-9, for examples.

supervise endowments. It was not only slow to make such decisions, but it was often unwilling or unable to enforce them once made. At different times, the government scolded or cajoled both the Majlis Millī and the Patriarch, but it seemed unable to take stronger action. It never tried to force the monasteries to deliver waqf accounts to the Majlis, and the clergy obviously felt relatively free to ignore the government.

The government was, to an extent, caught between Palace support of the Patriarch and British sympathy for the reformers. Palace-tied governments like that of Sidqī in the 1930s, especially were pushed to strengthen clerical power, but were usually prevented from doing so by the British. One notable success was the imposition of Patriarch Yu'annis on the community.

Of course, it was easier to contemplate interfering with the Majlis Millī than dictating to the Holy Synod. With the whole of the Western world as an audience, the government was understandably cautious about openly opposing the Patriarch who was the symbolic, if not always accepted, leader of the Copts.

The British played an important role in encouraging reform, but intervened only when some action of the Egyptian government threatened the reform party or the Majlis. They avoided squabbles in which the Egyptian government was not involved. They were interested only in protecting the community from the government and not from itself; after the Anglo-Egyptian treaty was signed, intervention in this area ceased.

The community no longer had an accepted hierarchy of authority. Its fragmentation could have incidentally served the purpose of the state because it prevented the Copts from presenting a united front.

Some Copts even invited the government to take power over from the community. Government power did, in fact grow in certain areas; witness the 1950 law amending the Lay Council charter because the community could not agree on election regulations. The rivalry between clergy and laymen did then hamper whatever protection the millet system was able to offer the Copts, and perhaps hastened its ultimate ruin. However, the main government reaction when faced with Coptic affairs was not one of delight at an opportunity, but of sheer annoyance due to the intractability of the problem. As one Foreign Office official noted in 1935, the government no sooner tried to remedy Coptic grievances than the various factions began quarrelling violently over what form the remedies would take; and, before the government secured agreement, it would fall and a new one would come into office.[77]

Although many members of the Majlis thought the traditional ordering of the community was archaic, they fought hard against government encroachments in areas such as education and personal status jurisdiction. They were interested in weakening the clergy only to their own advantage and not that of the government. They were, however, proponents of equality, and they complained about government and private discrimination against Copts.

The institution of parliamentary government broadened the arena of struggle. Traditionally the government sought the advice of its own Coptic officials or the clergy on communal affairs. Now Coptic politicians also sought to persuade the government of the validity of their views in the dispute; and the government used them to help

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77. FO.371/19082, J515/153/16.

mediate whenever endemic quarrels reached epidemic proportions. The Majlis was anxious to see advocates of communal reform elected to Parliament so that its views could be represented. The clergy also recognized the usefulness of this, and in 1925 the monastery Dair al-Muharraq spent £E2,000 on an election party for Tawfīq Dūs.[78] There is some question, however, as to the extent to which politicians and even high officials used these channels. In practice, such men may have feared to represent the community because of the harm it could do their careers. They had what amounted to a conflict of interest, which perhaps worked to the community's detriment. Men without such ties potentially were less influential, but perhaps were less reluctant to make their voices heard. Many politicians may have been more interested in communal affairs before 1919; after that date the chance to participate in national politics gave them an alternative. To the extent that the Wafd and its Coptic politicians were interested in the problem, they generally sympathized with reform. It was the coalition government of 1927 and the Wafd government of 1944 which made changes favourable to the Majlis. Other parties proved more lukewarm toward reform, although the movement had important supporters among non-Wafdists.

The lay reformers, although bitterly deploring government intervention when it benefited the clergy, were happy to countenance it when it was in their favour. They were able to weaken the tie between the state and the Patriarch, and this in turn weakened the Patriarch's ability to represent his flock to the government. Now that the government was relying less on the church for other things, it may have looked less to the church to present communal views.

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78. Senate Debates, session 28, 28 June 1926.

The church, in any case, was cautious about publicly appealing to the government and Palace on behalf of the Copts. It had to take care that its actions, so visible, did not jeopardize the group. Weak Patriarchs, like Mãqariūs and Yūsāb, were ill-equipped to act to protect Coptic interests, and even strong ones like Yu'ānnis were wary of crossing the Palace.

The Majlis' success in gaining control of the community was limited. It spent most of its energy trying to gain what it saw as its rights, rather than exercising them, and foolishly made almost every issue a point of contention. It was not always a responsible body and absenteeism was chronic. Murqus Simaika, founder of the Coptic Museum, argued that the Council was financially incompetent; those estates it did manage showed an annual deficit, which was met by selling property.[79] Iris al-Masrī thinks that from the early 1940s the Majlis was of limited value and lost much prestige in the eyes of Copts.[80] This may be true. At a time when the Copts were at increasing risk in the larger society, the Majlis, along with the clergy, was expending its energies on intra-communal problems.

Given that endowments were such a hotly contested prize, and that there probably was some truth to allegations of clerical ineptitude and corruption, it would be surprising if they were not mismanaged. Unfortunately, the church was secretive about the amount of property it owned; there are no statistics reliable enough to permit firm conclusions about the fate of the endowments and their revenue over time.

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79. FO.141/755, 124/6/33.
80. Interview, Iris al-Masrī, 24 August 1979.

Clerical and lay estimates of monastic holdings ranged between 5,000 and 9,000 feddans.[81] Expenses were low and profits from land and property were, at least in some years, quite high. Dair al-Muharraq had 35 monks and an annual income of £E100,000 in 1927.[82] Twenty-one years earlier, when the monastery's income had totalled only £E9,633, its expenses had reached £E1,233, leaving an 87 per cent profit.[83] No doubt some of this profit was invested to produce still larger incomes; certainly, little of it was spent on improving monastic conditions.

B. The Coptic Press

The number of periodicals published in Egypt in the past century and the range of views they expressed are surprising given the small size of the literate public. Few could support themselves from subscription rates; as one Copt in the business said, there was no quicker way to financial ruin than to start a newspaper.[84] Most periodicals relied on special subsidies from those whose opinions they expressed. The uncertainty in funding, however, meant that periodicals frequently changed hands and, on occasion, showed startling reversals in political allegiance. The relative freedom accorded the press made it a useful political and social tool, and sometimes newspapers were suspended because of the violence of their attacks on the government.

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81. See the following for various estimates: Misr, 7 August 1926, p.1; 16 March 1944, p.3; 20 March 1944, p.3. Ramzī Tādrūs, al-'Aqbāt fī al-Qarn al-ᶜIshrīn, vol.1 (Cairo 1911), pp.136-7. Gabriel Baer, A History of Land Ownership in Modern Egypt, 1800-1950 (London 1962) p.179.
82. Misr, 16 March 1944, p.3., quoting Sūryāl's memorandum to the Senate, 14 April 1927.
83. Misr, 20 March 1944, p.3.
84. Misr, 27 April 1935, p.7.

Coptic periodicals follow this general pattern and provide evidence of a lively, if disunited, communal life. Copts published religious, intellectual and political periodicals, some of which were meant to appeal to Muslims as well as Christians. Internal communal matters were a natural concern; articles covered such assorted topics as Coptic history, Coptic cultural and religious mores and, of course, the various quarrels over church organization.

Although Coptic periodicals did not speak with one voice, they did unite on some issues. They helped to promote, some more consciously than others, communal solidarity; and they sometimes defended Coptic interests. Their freedom in voicing complaints about discrimination suggests considerable Muslim tolerance. From the mid-1940s especially, Coptic periodicals encouraged the idea that there was a Coptic political perspective rather than as many political views as there were Copts. They even encouraged co-operation between the normally hostile Coptic Christian sects. Three of the most important Coptic periodicals will be reviewed here. Two, Misr (Egypt) and al-Watan (The Homeland), were daily papers, and one, al-Manāra al-Misriyya (The Egyptian Lighthouse) was sometimes published weekly, and sometimes monthly.

1. Misr

Misr was the chief Coptic organ in the period under study. It sometimes served as a regular party paper with a Muslim as well as Coptic readership; and, at other times, it addressed itself mainly to communal concerns. It was founded in 1895 by a wealthy 'Asyūtī who wished to counteract the relatively pro-clerical views of al-Watan. The paper consistently advocated an increase in lay participation in church affairs. Its self-conscious role was as a

watchdog of the Copts,[85] and after 1930, it was the only daily organ reporting on clerical activities. It was a leader in the communal reform movement, and its support for the Coptic Lay Council offered that body some protection from government, if not clerical, interference.

Misr probably had a largely middle-class and educated audience. It received financial support from printing the announcements of the Lay Council, the Patriarchate, Coptic societies and the government. Particularly after 1930, it had a virtual monopoly on the announcements of communal organizations. It may have received covert subsidies from reformers. There is some evidence that it at times received a direct subsidy from the Patriarchate[86] and at times from the Wafd.[87]

Misr purported to guide the Copts in national as well as communal affairs. The paper supported the British Occupation and defended the Copts from the attacks of the Muslim press in the troubled first decade of this century. It was then a stronger champion of Coptic rights than at any other time until the mid-1940s.

In 1918, Misr experienced a change of heart and became both vehemently anti-British and pro-Wafdist. Financial difficulties were partly responsible for the conversion, after which circulation soared.[88] Misr became a major Zaghlūlist organ with both Copts and Muslims on staff. For example, one series of articles written by the Coptic

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85. Misr, 5 August 1931, p.5.
86. This is curious given Misr's views. However, in 1946 the Patriarchate gave Misr £E1,400, a subvention it then threatened to cancel if Salāma Mūsā continued as Editor. Yūsāb may have arranged the subsidy because Mūsā supported him in his campaign to become Patriarch. He now wanted Mūsā fired because the latter had upset the government. DW. ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives, Tawā'if Dīniyya, Memorandum 15, 8 December 1946.
87. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīḥa, 13 June 1979.
88. 'Anwār al-Jundī thinks that circulation was around 4,000 early in the century. Another source claims that it climbed to 100,00 in 1919, but this sounds wildly inflated. 'Anwar al-Jundī, al-Ṣiḥāfa al-Siyāsiyya (Cairo 1962), p.150; Severianus, "Les Coptes de l'Egypte Musulmane", Etudes Mediterranéennes 6 (1959): 80.

nationalist Sinūt Hannā in 1919 played an influential role in bringing down the Muhammad Saʿīd Ministry.[89]

When ʿAdlī became Prime Minister in 1921, and quarrelled with Zaghlūl, Misr moved into the moderate ʿAdlist camp and Mahmūd ʿAzmī, a noted secularist, was named editor. During the Tharwat Ministry, which followed that of ʿAdlī, the paper vacillated between ʿAdlī and Zaghlūl,[90] but eventually chose to support the latter. By November 1922 Misr was attacking the new Liberal Constitutionalist party with which ʿAdlī had ties. The paper remained Wafdist, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm for most of the next three decades.

Until 1925 Misr was an important Wafdist organ publishing mainly articles of national concern. Then again during the 1928 Mahmūd Cabinet, when many Wafdist periodicals were suspended, the party leaned heavily on Misr. Staff from the suspended Kawkab al-Sharq joined Misr, and ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād continued to write for the paper even after Kawkab resumed publication. The depredations of the Sidqī regime increased the Wafd's reliance on Misr; by May 1931, it was the only Wafdist paper in circulation, and al-ʿAqqād was again editor. Its attacks on Sidqī persuaded the latter to have the paper suspended; it soon reappeared with al-ʿAqqād at the helm again.

Misr's ties with the Wafd would never again be so close. After the owner's death in 1932, his sons kept some distance from politics until the Wafd returned to power in 1936. The paper was enthusiastically Wafdist until the shock of the disastrous 1938 election defeat inspired caution. There was little criticism of

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89. Misr was suspended because of these articles. Tāriq al-Bishrī, "Misr al-Hadītha Bain 'Ahmad w-al-Masīh", al-Kātib 115 (1970): 130.
90. One Palace observer recorded that it lacked a precise political colour. C.C.E.H. ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives, Note on the Political Press in Egypt, undated but probably written between June and November of 1922.

the Mahmud government. Misr, pleased with the Wafd's return to power in 1942, avoided comment on the argument between al-Naḥḥās and his Coptic ally, Makram ʿUbaid. It neither rushed to support ʿUbaid after his split from the party, nor continued to back the Wafd. Misr was soon complaining that the Wafd refused to allocate it enough newsprint; it had to suspend publication twice in 1944. The paper was relieved to see ʾAḥmad Māhir made Prime Minister in 1944, but none the less newsprint remained scarce.

From 1946, Misr assumed a markedly communal character and largely withdrew from the national political arena. Under Salāma Mūsā, who became Editor in 1942, Misr was so zealous in its defence of Coptic rights that the Ṣidqī government accused the paper of fanaticism and refused to publish any more announcements in its pages.[91] In the increasingly charged atmosphere of communal tension, Misr sought to protect the minority by attacking the majority. It assailed the bigotry of the Muslim Brethren, doubted the wisdom of British withdrawal and criticized the 1950 Wafd Cabinet.

For much of this period then, Misr was attached in some measure to the Wafd. To an extent, it was responsible for creating and maintaining Coptic support for that party; it later both mirrored and encouraged Coptic dissatisfaction with the party. If at times Misr overlooked parochial interests in its enthusiasm for national ones, its links with the Wafd were an advantage and afforded more protection to the community than a strongly sectarian stand. Its disaffection from the political system dates from the 1938 election and with the Wafd from 1942-3. The Wafd did not need Misr's

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91. This entailed considerable loss for the paper. Misr, 13 May 1946, p.1.

support after 1938 because it had several periodicals expressing party views. Misr's backing may even have entailed some risk given the accusation made during the 1938 campaign that the Wafd was a Coptic clique.

2. Al-Watan

The first of the Coptic dailies was founded in 1878, and it backed the ecclesiastics in their struggle to limit the say of laymen in church affairs. Although willing in time to countenance moderate reform, its pro-clerical stance guaranteed it a Patriarchal subsidy.[92] With its sale in 1923 to a lawyer, the paper became an advocate of communal reform, although of a slightly more conservative complexion than Misr.

Al-Watan opposed the British occupation until the 1890s, when it became a staunch defender of both the British presence in Egypt and Coptic rights.[93] Lacking its rival's talent for prediction, al-Watan continued to favour the British well into the 1920s. It condemned both the revolution and Zaghlūl;[94] in time, however, it came to recognize how little support there was for the retention of British control, and it modified its tone.

It continued, however, to urge co-operation with the British and called upon the Egyptians to present their views to the Milner Mission. Unlike the nationalists, it celebrated the 1922 grant of independence.

Al-Watan was, at this time, primarily concerned with national and not communal affairs. Like Misr, it had Muslims on staff and

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92. FO.407/186, No.237 (enclosure), Memorandum on the Coptic Church, 1920.
93. Seikaly, The Copts, p.122; al-Jundī, al-Ṣiḥāfa, p.150; FO.371/895, 47092/47092/16.
94. One Residency official applauded its "sensible articles", FO.407/184, No.182, Sir M. Ceetham to Earl Curzon, 25 March 1919.

backed ʿAdlī when he became Prime Minister. The fact that Muslims could even temporarily write for Coptic papers meant that Copt-Muslim differences had blurred, their place taken by a more critical issue. Muslim writers probably helped attract Muslim readers without losing any of the paper's traditional Coptic audience. Al-Watan's natural inclination was to support whatever Ministry was in power, and it also made frequent protestations of loyalty to the throne. Even if it was not always enthusiastic about a given government, it generally refrained from the sort of criticism to which Misr was given.

With al-Watan's sale in late 1923, the paper began to support the Wafd Ministry. Unfortunately, it was too late. The Wafd did not need two Coptic papers. Misr had both a stronger claim on the party's affection and a larger circulation. In fact, al-Watan's mistake may have been to look too much like its rival, with similar views on church and national affairs. It began to appear sporadically in 1927, and finally disappeared in 1930.

Al-Watan was most influential in the period before the First World War. It appealed, until 1924, to older, more traditional Copts who were comfortable with the status quo and who exhibited some degree of Anglophilia.[95] The radical change in viewpoint in 1924 occurred not only because of a change in ownership, but because there were fewer readers who opposed communal reform and supported the British. Al-Watan's defection left the Partiarch without a mouthpiece, and it left the British with only al-Muqattam of the Arabic press to express their views.

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95. FO.407/186, No.203 (enclosure), Note on the Egyptian Press, 1920.

3. Al-Manāra al-Miṣriyya

This journal in 1928 succeeded one published by its owner, Murqus Sergīus, in the Sudan. Sergīus, a radical priest with a parish in Cairo, was a popular if notorious figure. Known for his advocacy of church reform, he also acquired reputation as a fiery orator during the 1919 revolution. For all but a brief period in the 1940s, he and his journals were the bane of the Patriarchate because of their strong advocacy of reform.[96]

Although al-Manāra was primarily interested in religious affairs, it also dealt with Copt-Muslim relations.[97] Its owner broke with the Wafd in the 1920s; consequently, his journal had no party affiliation and tended to evaluate issues in terms of their affect on the Coptic community. It defended Coptic rights even when other Coptic journals were slow to do so, and it routinely reported incidents of communal violence. Al-Manāra frequently protested against discrimination and government interference in communal affairs;[98] it also attacked the Muslim Brethren, called for the dissolution of all Islamic societies and deplored Muslim oppression of Copts.

C. Voluntary Associations

1. Non-Political

In the past century, many Coptic societies were founded and flourished. They had different aims but most combined religious

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96. He supported the Patriarchate of his friend Makarios, and also for a time, that of Yūsāb.
97. The radical priest 'Ibrāhīm Lūqā published a similar journal, (al-Yaqza), but it, unlike its owner, seems to have restricted its scope to church affairs.
98. See March and April 1948. The journal did assume a somewhat more temperate tone during Sergīus' two terms as Patriarchal Deputy (wakīl) under Makarios and Yūsāb.

sentiments with social objectives. Their ultimate purpose was to serve the community and, while some chose to do this by circulating devotional pamphlets, others helped by building schools and hospitals. At least one society was formed for the sole purpose of encouraging church reform, but many became involved in lay-clerical quarrels and most seemed to back the reform party. These societies tried to compensate for the weakness of the community; one task they assumed was the church's traditional responsibility for charity. At the same time, they reinforced communal bonds by encouraging religious faith and communal schooling. They helped keep the Coptic poor from looking elsewhere for help, and they provided a social outlet for their members. They limited the attraction of Islam by providing for the same needs and satisfactions as did parallel Muslim organizations.

Coptic voluntary associations provided services that the state either was unable to provide due to limited resources, or was unwilling to provide for non-Muslims. In trying to lighten the burden of being Copt in a Muslim society, these organizations were doing as much of a service for the government as they were for individual Copts. Copts generally felt that the government should help any society acting for the public good, regardless of religious affiliation.[99] This was something the government was reluctant to do because grants to Coptic societies or the church often drew fire from the opposition press.[100] Grants generally were made to

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99. See M. Fahmī's speech, the Coptic Congress held at Asyut, p.48.
100. For example, al-Thaghr objected in 1937 to the Ministry of Finance's modest contribution of £E1,000 to Coptic schools in Qinā, pointing out that the secondary school of a Muslim charitable institution in 'Aswān had had to close because of a lack of funds. Al-Thaghr, 1 April 1937, p.1.

Coptic institutions on special occasions, like Christian holidays, and gifts sometimes came from the Palace, but money was not budgeted routinely. These societies could not plan on the basis of an annual allocation in the government budget. Coptic charities that helped Muslims and Copts were more likely to benefit from government largesse. For instance, the Coptic Hospital, which provided free treatment for more Muslims than Copts in 1922-3, received aid from the Ministry of the Interior.[101]

Most members of the Lay Council, which nominally supervised these societies, were active in association life. The societies had considerable independence and there was little formal co-ordination of their activities or views.[102] From time to time, appeals were made for unity and talks were held, but they were unproductive.[103] In 1947, Salāma Mūsā unsuccessfully called upon Coptic societies to form an agency to find employment for young Copts and investigate charges of discrimination.[104] Coptic societies generally were not outspoken in their defence of Coptic rights, at least not until the late 1940s.

Most association members were at least middle class; they came from the landed gentry, the civil service and the professions. Coptic politicians often joined communal societies; no doubt some were active with the hope of strengthening their electoral support in the community. Since many members had some role in government, they

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101. D.W. ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives. Ṭawā'if wa Jamʿīyat Diniyya 2. Letter from President Jirjis Anṭūn to Ḥassan Nash'āt Pasha, 31 March 1925.
102. One association, the Union of Coptic Societies, was able to bring some societies together, but it still spoke as one voice among many.
103. A number of societies met in March 1936 to discuss unity, but their talks bore no fruit.
104. Misr, 25 June 1947, p.1.

may have used their influence on behalf of the community, and particularly in encouraging government support for church reform.

The government had always, of course, given more money to Muslim societies and had had correspondingly more control over them than over Coptic societies. From the 1940s, the government showed an inclination to increase its control over both kinds of societies, but without a concomitant desire to increase its funding for Coptic associations. Partly the government had a legitimate interest in protecting both the contributors to and beneficiaries of private charity, but it may also have been suspicious of voluntary activities that duplicated, at least in theory, those social services the government now was trying to provide to both Copts and Muslims. Perhaps the government feared that some of these associations could come to challenge its authority and undermine its legitimacy.

The Copts naturally saw government interference as an infringement on their autonomy and objected bitterly. A 1945 law regulating donations gave the Ministry of Social Affairs considerable power over Coptic societies, including the implicit right to inspect church accounts.[105] Three years later the Ministry ruled that churches must obtain its permission to collect donations and put out poor boxes.[106] In addition, the Ministry ordered certain Christian associations to keep a register of speakers with summaries of their sermons. As the French Embassy noted, this allowed the government to take steps against those associations showing too great a concern with the inequities of Egyptian society.[107] What was more disturbing was

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105. Law No.49 (1945) was designed to protect the public by supervising the collection and use of donations. See Misr, 24 December 1946, p.1.
106. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, M. Gilbert Arvengas to M. Georges Bidault, 15 March 1948; Misr, 20 April 1948, p.3.
107. French Embassy Archives, ibid., 29 April 1948.

the annnouncement that the Ministry hoped to keep a proportion of Coptic to Muslim societies similar to the Coptic percentage of the population. Misr argued that this was blatantly discriminatory and noted glumly that Coptic societies were so busy fighting the government for the right to exist that they had little time for good works.[108] By the early 1950s, the Ministry was refusing to give funds to Coptic organizations serving only Copts.[109] In 1951, when the government actually planned to supervise collections in churches, the Patriarch was moved to protest; the government at least in this one instance, retreated.[110]

2. Political

There were few attempts to form Coptic political organizations and only one example of a group with political goals growing out of a religious association. In 1908 the wealthy Copt, 'Akhnūkh Fānūs, formed the Independent Egyptian Party as a reaction to both inter-communal tensions and the Islamic colouring of the nationalist movement.[111] First called 'Aḥrār al-'Aqbāṭ (Coptic Liberals), the party changed its name under fire from other Copts.[112] Although seen by some as an attempt to create a religious party,[113] the party had little in its platform that was of interest only to Copts. The party appears to have attracted the support of some conservative and wealthy Muslims[114] and did not intend, after its initial blunder, to be a Coptic party. However, Fānūs' reputation as an advocate of Coptic rights, probably

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108. Misr, 20 April 1948, p.3.
109. Zaghīb Mīkhā'īl, Farriq...Tasud! al-Wahda al-Wataniyya? (Cairo n.d.) p.171.
110. Misr, 17 February 1951, trans. in The Cry of Egypt's Copts (New York 1951), pp.10-11.
111. L.Y. Yūnān, al-Hayāt al-Ḥizbiyya fī Miṣr, 1881-1914 (Cairo 1970), p.46.
112. Samīra Bahr, "al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Ḥayat al-Siyāsiyya fi Misr",
113. Ibid., p.409.
114. Ibid., p.236.

frightened off both Muslim and Coptic support. Orthodox Copts would have been suspicious of his Protestantism and the 'Umma group, with its moderate political views, probably provided serious competition. Whatever the reason, the party was a failure.

In 1949, Ramsīs Jibrāwī, a lawyer, labour leader and Misr correspondent,[115] founded a Coptic party, the National Democratic Party, in reaction to troubled communal relations. The party criticized restrictions on the freedom of worship and demanded that they be lifted.[116] It also complained about discrimination and inadequate parliamentary representation; one call was for the establishment of proportional representation. Despite Misr's support, the party soon floundered. Copts perhaps failed to join it from a fear that it would aggravate an already bad situation.

The most important Coptic political organization was the Coptic Nation (al-'Umma al-Qibtiyya). Active between September 1952 and 1954, the group's roots lay in the violence and discrimination of the 1940s and 1950s. Sometimes called the Coptic Brethren, it modelled itself on the Muslim Brethren in its mix of politics and religion and its desire to purify the Coptic religion. Both societies manipulated traditional religious symbols in their quest for power. The Coptic Nation was the only organization that Copts determined to alleviate the community's grievances could join.[117]

Founded by a young lawyer, 'Ibrāhīm Fahmī Hilāl, the group had many young professional members, including Ramsīs Jibrāwī. Hilāl

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115. He was adviser to several unions in the early 1930s and was the second Vice-President of ʿAbbās Ḥalīm's Egyptian Labour Party. R. Graves, acting Director of the European Department, commented that Jibrāwī was foolish, insignificant and lacking "even the virtue of enthusiasm", FO.141/763, 506/33/31; 506/2A/31; 506/1/31.
116. Misr, 11 June 1949, p.1.
117. Interview, Dr. Zāhir Riyāḍ, Director of the African Department, Coptic Higher Research Institute, 1 June 1979.

and his friends had talked about the need for a Coptic political organization since secondary school, but the catlyst was added only with the burning of a Coptic church in Suez in January 1952.[118] The party claimed to be a social or religious organization and not a political one, but its activist bent ensured its rapid growth among the disenchanted young.[119]

Al-'Umma identified the Muslim Brethren as the chief threat to the Copts and, like the Brethren, illegally collected arms and trained members in their use.[120] Because the Brethren asked for an Islamic state, al-'Umma demanded a Coptic one. Hilāl now claims that this was only propaganda and that the group's real goal was the separation of religion and state.[121] Nevertheless, the demand may have been a serious one at the time. The party had a flag and a motto that declared that God was their king, Egypt their country, the Gospels their law and the Cross their badge.[122] They published pamphlets and a newspaper and asked the government to give the Copts their own radio station. They complained that the census undercounted Copts, and they demanded a constitutional amendment naming the Copts a "nation" ('umma).

Members worked to strengthen religious feeling. Cultural differences in Egypt were no longer so acute so the society took old, devalued symbols, like the Coptic language, and tried to reinvest them with meaning.[123] Members assumed a puritanical outlook, studied and

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118. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm Fahmī Hilāl, 22 May 1979.
119. Hilāl claimed that the society, within one year, had established branches outside Cairo, and had membership of 92,000. Ibid.
120. The 1954 government order banning the party claimed that it had created a paramilitary organization. Baḥr, al-'Aqbāṭ, p.359.
121. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm Fahmī Hilāl, 22 May 1979.
122. Baḥr, al-'Aqbāṭ, p.354.
123. See Abner Cohen on this subject in Two-Dimensional Man (London 1974), p.103.

and spoke Coptic, wore special clothes and adhered strictly to Biblical injunctions.

The group also supported church reform and opposed the Orthodox religious establishment; it saw the church's internal corruption and disunity as responsible for the community's external weakness. One solution they advocated was the deposition of Patriarch Yūsāb.[124] The latter understandably asked for and received a government order dissolving the society in 1954.[125] The society went underground and made an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap the Patriarch and later to assassinate him. Leading members of the society, including Hilāl and Jibrāwī, were tried, convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

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124. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, letter to the Ambassador from S. Fishawī, a member of the society, August 1954.
125. Bahr, al-'Aqbāt, p.359.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BRITISH, THE COPTS AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

A. British-Copt Relations before the 1919 Revolution

The British attitude toward the Egyptians was marked by a belief in the superiority of Western culture so strong that not even the fact that some Egyptians shared that culture's religion inclined the British to make exceptions. In their eyes, Coptic Orthodoxy lacked "the true and spiritual part of Christianity",[1] and therefore bore no resemblance to European Christianity. Missionaries, frustrated in their attempts to convert Muslims, were particular proponents of this view and were anxious to persuade Copts to adopt their brand of Christianity. One Anglican association working in nineteenth-century Egypt declared its refusal to tolerate "the soul-destroying heresy of the Copts".[2] As a religion replete with bizarre ritual and superstition, it had failed, as Cromer so nicely put it, to provide its adherents with any moral benefit.[3] Copts were seen as compulsive liars[4] who were servile and addicted to alcohol.[5] Perhaps their chief fault was that they had failed to distinguish themselves from their Muslim compatriots and thereby succeeded in questioning Western notions about Christianity's superiority to Islam.

The British in Egypt, unlike those in India, did not have an ethnic preference, perhaps because Egyptian communal differences were less distinctive.[6] There were, in any case, few benefits to be

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1. M.L. Whately, Among the Huts in Egypt (London 1873), pp.149-50.
2. S.H. Leeder, Modern Sons of the Pharaohs (London 1918), p.310.
3. Lord Cromer, Modern Egypt, II (London 1908), p.205.
4. Leeder, Modern Sons, op.cit., p.328.
5. Ibid., p.327; quoting Blackwood's Magazine, August 1911.
6. Cromer wrote that bigotry, ignorance and vice were traits shared by both Muslims and Copts. Cromer, Modern Egypt, II, op.cit., p.207.

derived from favouring Copts in this overwhelmingly Muslim society; and the British were usually careful lest their actions be interpreted by Muslims in this light. In this instance, however, Coptic and Muslim perceptions of British preferences matter more than the preferences themselves. Each community was convinced that the British favoured the other. Muslims believed that the British had set aside their fellow Christians for special treatment. Copts, who expected this treatment,[7] were disappointed and viewed the neglect of their complaints as indicative of a preference for Muslims.[8]

However, the Coptic attitude toward the Occupation did depend partly on the state of inter-communal relations which were in turn influenced by Muslim perceptions of the two between the British and the Copts. It was easier for the Copts, as Christians and an already subject people, to adjust to foreign non-Muslim rule. Whatever their differences with the British, and they had many, the Copts were grateful for British protection whenever communal relations were strained. When relations with Muslims were good, the British presence naturally seemed less vital and desirable.

The Copts felt British injustice most keenly in the matter of the Egyptian civil service. From the time of Khedive 'Ismā'īl's deposition, they saw Coptic positions lost first to a policy of retrenchment and then to Syrians and Armenians and finally to the British.[9] One missionary reported in 1884 that a majority of Copts

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7. Copts seeking jobs from British employers sometimes made their appeal in the name of the Saviour. Leeder, Modern Sons, op.cit., p.326.
8. See Kiriakus Mikhail's letter of complaint to The Times, 20 September 1910, quoted in FO.371/894, 38033/38033/16.
9. Murqus Simaika listed the grievance about the civil service as one reason the Copts joined the nationalists in 1919. FO.371/3711, J12835/1180/16. Hourani also thinks that fewer Coptic officials were employed in this period than previously. Albert Hourani, Minorities in the Arab World (London 1947), p.229.

opposed the British Occupation because so many Coptic officials had been dismissed.[10] Gorst, responding to what he thought was a legitimate Egyptian grievance, tried to increase Egyptian employment in the civil service. However, the Copts believed that only Muslims benefited from his scheme. Copts were particularly disturbed by what they saw as the loss of senior jobs. It is unlikely that they held such jobs in great numbers before the Occupation, but it is possible that the British were reluctant to award too many top posts to Copts for fear of seeming biased. They certainly did believe that the Copts, as non-Muslims, were ill-fitted to hold positions like those in the upper echelons of the provincial administration.[11] The Copts became increasingly dissatisfied with the British attitude toward them; and the hardships that they, along with Muslims, suffered during World War I reinforced their discontent and helped set the stage for Coptic participation in the nationalist movement.

B. Zaghlūl, the Formation of the Wafd and the 1919 Revolution

Egyptian notables began meeting informally to discuss Egypt's future at the end of 1917. Other than one such visit paid by 'Akhnūkh Fānūs to Zaghlūl in the spring of 1918,[12] no Copt seems to have participated in the discussions. This is due partly to Zaghlūl's eagerness to include elected members, among whom there were no Copts, of the old Legislative Assembly. In addition, there was a certain amount of social segregation, and both Muslims and Copts had yet to reconsider the Coptic attitude toward independence.

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10. CMS Archives, Klein to the Secretary of CMS, 7 July 1884, E/133.
11. FO.141/742, 4902/2/17.
12. Lāshīn ᶜAbd al-Khāliq Lāshīn, Saᶜd Zaghlūl wa Dawrah fī al-Siyāsa al-Misriyya, II, (Cairo 1975), p.121.

By the time of the Wafd's visit to Wingate in November 1918, two groups had coalesced; one around Zaghlūl and the other around Prince ᶜUmar Ṭusūn. One Copt, Sinūṭ Ḥannā, had joined the Prince's circle, but he was soon lured into the Wafdist camp.[13] In Sinūṭ's favour were his influential and wealthy Banī Suwaif family and his membership, although only appointed, in the Legislative Assembly. A second Copt, George Khayyāṭ, was recommended for membership by his fellow ʾAsyūṭi, Muḥammad Maḥmūd, and was accepted after Sinūṭ.[14] Khayyāṭ, a wealthy Protestant, was the American Consul in ʾAsyūṭ, and the Wafd probably hoped to use him to influence American opinion.[15] The Wafd now consisted of twelve Muslims and two Copts. Wāṣif Ghālī, son of the assassinated Prime Minister, was the next Copt to join the Wafd.[16] He was an obvious choice given the importance of his family and the fame that he had gained by publishing nationalist articles in the French press. The readiness of the Zaghlūlists to accept Coptic supporters and allow them a productive role owed much to the political ideas of the pre-war 'Umma party. These post-war nationalists had no interest in pan-Islam and believed that the interests of their own country superseded all other considerations.

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13. Perhaps Sinūṭ felt that the Prince, in the long run, would be less hospitable to the Copts than the Zaghlūlists. Al-ᶜAqqād suggests that he was offered Wafd membership only when it was learnt that he was about to join a delegation that Muḥammad Saᶜid was trying to form. ᶜAbbās al-ᶜAqqād, Saᶜd Zaghlūl: Sīra wa Tāḥiya (Cairo 1936), p.256.
14. Zaghlūl mentioned this fact in his diary. It is quoted in Lāshīn, Saᶜd Zaghlūl, II, p.163.
15. The Zaghlūlists were aware of the influence that missionaries had on their home governments. The British saw Khayyāṭ as a non-entity and it is true that his political career was undistinguished. He perhaps was chosen to represent the well-educated and well-off Protestant community. FO.371/3204, J195347/186090/16.
16. There are several versions of how the Copts joined the Wafd. Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr recalls that he took the initiative, talking first to ᶜAlī Sha'rawī about the possibility of Coptic representation and then to Copts in the Ramsis Club. The latter appointed a

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Little public attention was paid to the Zaghlūlists until the arrest and exile of four senior members.[17] Although Misr began publishing articles lauding Copt-Muslim unity in January, neither it nor al-Watan followed the Wafd's activities until the March 1919 uprising. Other newspapers also printed articles promoting fraternity, and this helped make Coptic participation in the nationalist movement possible. Al-Watan was cautious about this idea of unity and warned of the difficulty of achieving it; without equality, noted the paper, it was a house built on sand.[18] Seeing itself as the special representative of Coptic interests, a role it did not think Misr was fulfilling, al-Watan aimed a barrage of criticism at Coptic leaders in the Wafd and claimed that they did not represent the community.[19] Not all Copts, then, supported the nationalists. Murqus Simaika insisted in January 1919 that he had no faith in Muslim justice and believed that a British yoke was safer than a Muslim one.[20] Many, many Copts, however, supported Misr's views and were eager to play a role in the struggle for independence.

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16. (continued from previous page) delegation of three, including Fakhrī and Sinūt to visit Zaghlūl. When the four men met, Wāṣif Ghālī was the first person they chose, then Sinūt and Khayyāt. Ghālī only joined later than these two because the cable inviting him went astray. ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād, on the other hand, suggests that the Copts sent Wīsā Wāṣif to talk to Saʿd and that Wīsā, himself declining to be the first Coptic member, suggested Ghālī. There seems to be no confirmation of either tale in Zaghlūl's diary. Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, "Mudhakkirātī" (unpublished typescript 1942), pp.21-3; Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, "Mudhakkirātī", al-Musawwar, 21 March 1969, p.34; ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād, Saʿd Zaghlūl, op.cit., pp.255-6.
17. As Muḥammad Maḥmūd pointed out to Grafftey-Smith. Lawrence Grafftey-Smith, Bright Levant (London 1970), p.65.
18. Al-Watan, 7 March 1919, p.1; 7 February 1919, p.1; 16 April 1919, p.2.
19. Tāriq al-Bishrī, "Misr al-Hadītha bain 'Aḥmad w-al-Masīḥ", al-Kātib 115 (1970) 137-8.
20. FO.371/3711, J12835/1180/16.

The British were incensed by this "opportunistic" betrayal. One Englishman called it yet "another instance of the desertion of a natural ally in our time of need".[21] The British believed that they had been fair to the Copts but, knowing that the Copts thought otherwise, they should not have taken umbrage at the Coptic defection. One popular British explanation was that the Copts had joined the nationalists from a fear of what would happen to them if they did not.[22] It was true, as one British official later noted, that Muslim tolerance was more vital to the Copts than "remote and not always effective alien Christian support",[23] but there was little sign of fear. The Copts had never been reluctant to voice their objections to nationalist ideas in the past. Not surprisingly, the British chose to ignore the positive reasons the Copts had for joining the movement; and some officials, despite strong evidence to the contrary, continued to believe that the Copts secretly wished the British to remain paramount in Egypt.

Salāma Mūsā later recalled that some Muslims also suspected the new Coptic attitude; it took the 1919 revolution to remove any lingering doubts about Coptic loyalty.[24] This two-month revolution was a heady lesson in the delights of Muslim-Copt collaboration. It established an ideal unity to which Egyptians often referred because fraternal feelings were stronger at this time than at any time since. Two images of the 1919 revolution dominate the Egyptian mind and Egyptian historiography: one is of a demonstration bearing aloft a

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21. Murray Harris, Egypt under the Egyptians (London 1925), p.162.
22. Ibid., p.162; FO.371/3717, 8291/24930/15.
23. FO.141/685, 8424/51/27.
24. Salāma Mūsā, The Education of Salāma Mūsā, translated by L.O. Schuman (Leiden 1961), p.108.

banner inscribed with a crescent and cross and the other is of priests and shaikhs sharing the pulpit in mosques and churches. Memory is always selective, but in this case it is not inaccurate. Both images symbolize unity, and it is interesting that it is these symbols that prevailed rather than some gesture indicating a more active and violent resistance to the colonial regime. Perhaps the explanation for this lies in the fact that unity was such an unprecedented and therefore memorable phenomenon.

Muslim ᶜulemā' and Coptic clergy did have an important role in the revolution, both in fomenting opposition to the British and in cementing unity. Shortly after news of Zaghlūl's deportation spread, Murqus Sergius led a huge demonstration to al-'Azhar and was the first Coptic priest to speak from its pulpit.[25] It was an invitation that was extended in following days to other priests. 'Aḥmad 'Amīn, an 'Azhari ᶜālim, later recalled his fondness for demonstrations in which he in his turban shared a carriage with a priest in a cassock, the two of them a living symbol of Egyptian unity. He recollected too that he always carried with him the cross and crescent flag.[26] Sometimes nationalist demonstrations even carried pictures of the Patriarch.

Priests and shaikhs visited one another and attended each other's religious services; even the Mufti of Egypt called on the Patriarch and the latter reciprocated.[27] Until the mid-1920s, churches, like

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25. Sergius was nick-named "the silver-tongued". He was arrested that spring after an incendiary four-hour speech at a mosque in Cairo. 'Aḥmad 'Abūkīf, "Sergius Khātib Thawrat 1919", al-Musawwar, 7 March 1969, p.34. FO.371/3720, 152737/24930/16.
26. 'Aḥmad 'Amīn, My Life, translated by Issa Boullata (Leiden 1978), p.133.
27. Egyptian Mail, 21 March 1919, p.2. Azharī ᶜulemā and students also visited the Patriarch. Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr, "Mudhakkirātī" (unpublished typescript 1924), p.2.

mosques, were the scene of many a meeting held in the nationalist interest; and this perhaps indicates in a small, circumstantial way a natural connection between religion and politics in Egyptian minds. Secular politicians realized that the involvement of religion in their cause worked to their advantage; the time would come, however, when they would realize the harm it could do. The participation of the clergy had a symbolic view in illustrating Muslim tolerance and a practical one in bringing Coptic support to the nationalists. It also defeated attempts to label the nationalist movement a religious one.

The Coptic role in the revolution was highly visible and substantial, and Copts were involved in all its facets: demonstrations, strikes,[28] propaganda, terrorism,[29] organization and policy-making. There were, for example, three Copts on a committee which organized an important and effective strike of government officials. As a second example, the 'Asyūṭ nationalist committee contained a majority of Copts.[30]

There was much ostentatious fraternizing between Muslims and Copts. Meetings celebrating unity were held all over Egypt, and religious holidays became special times for exhibiting brotherhood. Muslims, for example took part in the Easter festivities of 1919,[31] and Copts helped Muslims celebrate the ʿīd al-Fiṭr at the end of June.[32]

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28. For example, Rāghib 'Iskandar was a leading agitator among railway workers in 1919. FO.371/4983, J1495/93/16.
29. Both Rāghib and Najīb 'Iskandar belonged to secret societies. The famous Vengeance Society had six Coptic members and yet another society, the Torch, was headed by Murqus Ḥannā and Najīb Ghālī.
30. FO.371/3715, 59542/24930/16.
31. FO.371/3717, 87540/24930/16.
32. D.W. Mahfūẓāt Raqm 1. Makhtūṭ Raqm 5. ʿAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī's Memoirs (unpublished) 29 June 1919, p.424.

More than a little bad poetry was written on the theme of unity, and Misr continued writing articles in praise of brotherhood.

After Zaghlūl's release in April, Sinūṭ, Khayyāṭ and Wīṣā Wāṣif travelled with the Wafd to Paris for the Peace Conference. Wīṣā and Wāṣif Ghālī, who was already in Paris, were put in charge of propaganda, where their knowledge of French was useful. Khayyāṭ joined a committee charged with organizing meetings. The Wafdists, with their live Copts and their written endorsements from Egyptian Jews, made it clear to those they met that they had the support of Egypt's minorities.[33]

Back at home, the Wafdist Central Committee soon had several wealthy and mainly landowning Coptic members: Murqus Ḥannā, leader of the Egyptian Bar since 1914; Tawfīq Dūs, a lawyer with a less than pristine reputation; Kāmil Buṭrus; Dr. Ḥabīb Khayyāṭ, George's brother; Fahmī Wīṣā, another Protestant; and Ṣārūfīm Mīnā ᶜUbaid.[34] In September Sinūṭ returned to help the Central Committee; for a time, there was some thought of sending him to the United States, but his talents as a publicist were needed in Egypt.[35] The British were so concerned with the propaganda he was making against the Milner Mission that they soon ordered him to his country estate for some weeks.

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33. Maḥmūd 'Abū al-Fatah, Maᶜa al-Wafd al-Miṣrī, no place, n.d., pp.68-9.
34. D.W. Maḥfūẓāt Raqm 1. Makhtūṭ Raqm 3. ᶜAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī's Memoirs, 11 April 1919, pp.272-4.
35. FO.371/3720, J152737/24930/16. See his influential series of articles in Misr: 15 October 1919, p.2; 3 November 1919, p.1; 10 November 1919, p.1. Al-Watan attacked Sinūṭ for his articles critical of the Ministry on 13 November 1919, p.3; 24 November 1919, p.2; and 25 November 1919, p.1.

Several Wafdists, recognizing the need for English speakers, wanted the able Oxford-educated Copt, Makram ʿUbaid, to work with them. Like Sinūt, ʿUbaid was considered for a US assignment, but he appears to have wanted too much money.[36] He also wanted to be made a member of the Wafd. However bright he appeared on paper, no one in Paris knew him personally;[37] Zaghlūl wrote to one of ʿUbaid's advocates, ʿAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī, that he preferred to see something of ʿUbaid's work before adding him to the Wafd. The Central Committee in Cairo was not happy with this answer and more letters were exchanged until ʿUbaid was invited to join the inner circle in the spring of 1920. The party then acquired a superb orator whose skills enriched the party for many years and beggared it when he left.

Disagreements among the nationalists were more common than co-operation. There were arguments over tactics and there was much jockeying for position. Two of Zaghlūl's strongest backers in this

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36. Muḥammad 'Anīs, Darāsāt fī Wathā'iq Thawrat 1919, Vol.I (Cairo n.d.) pp.54-5.
37. Muḥammad Maḥmūd probably saw ʿUbaid as a threat to his position. He had already quarrelled with Ṣidqi, and Zaghlūl may have been reluctant to upset him further by admitting ʿUbaid to membership. Thawrat 1919: Mu'assasat al-'Ahrām, Markaz al-Wathā'iq (w'al-Buḥūth al-Ta'arīkhiyya li-Miṣr al-Muʿāṣirà), pp.444-5.

internal wrangling were Wīṣā Wāṣif and Sinūṭ.[38] The break came in the spring of 1921 over whether ᶜAdlī Pasha, as the Prime Minister, or the much more popular Zaghlūl would lead negotiations with the British. A majority of Wafdists thought Zaghlūl's insistence on heading the delegation was unreasonable, and they went over to ᶜAdli's faction.

The only three members of the original Wafd who remained with Zaghlūl were Sinūṭ, Wāṣif Ghālī and Wīṣā Wāṣif.[39] A few months later the Wafd was even more visibly Coptic.[40] In this year and the next the Wafd lost the support of many large landowners. It is curious that Coptic landowners, by and large, did not desert the party.

Some Copts feared that this visibility would poison unity and excite popular feeling against the community.[41] Wafdists too may have feared that the conspicuousness of their Coptic members would damage the party and so they paid great attention to promoting unity in the next months. In April a Wafd publication claimed that the Egyptians were a unique and homogeneous race, sharing physical and

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38. When ᶜAbd al-Rahman Fahmī was arrested that summer, Sinūṭ Hannā wanted to break off negotiations with the British, and quarrelled bitterly with ᶜAdlī over the issue. Even Zaghlūl thought that Sinūṭ had been overly zealous in the matter. Sinūṭ may have been one of the few in Paris to know about the secret terrorist organization run by Fahmī. See al-'Akhbār, 21 August 1963, p.4; Samīra Baḥr, al-'Aqbāṭ, p.545; Dr. H. Mu'nis, "Dawr al-'Aqbāṭ fī Thawrat 1919", 'Akhir Saᶜa, 16 May, part 2, 1973, p.21.
39. George Khayyāṭ did not leave at this point, but drifted away a few months later.
40. The Residency reported that the Wafd had six Coptic and two or three Muslim members. The Copts are Sinūṭ, ᶜUbaid, Wīṣā, Wāṣif, Ṣādiq Hinain and Salāma Mīkhā'il. The last two were actually added in 1922 and not in 1921 as the report suggests. FO.407/190, No.55, Report on the General Situation in Egypt, 4-10 August 1921.
41. Al-Waṭan, 25 June 1921, p.3.

mental characteristics.[42] ᶜUbaid, still backing Zaghlūl, claimed in another pamphlet that Egypt presented a striking example of religious toleration and unity. He praised Egyptian Muslims for rejoicing in the universal brotherhood that was the true spirit of Islam and added that the Egyptians did not make distinctions on the basis of religion.[43]

In November, ᶜAdli's negotiations with the British collapsed and he resigned from office. The following month, the British threatened Zaghlūl and several supporters with banishment unless they withdrew to their villages. Zaghlūl, Sinūṭ, ᶜUbaid and some others rejected the ultimatum and were exiled. The rest moved to the countryside but eventually returned to active political work. The exile, which the British hoped would strengthen the moderates, seems to have had the opposite effect. Eight of the schismatics, including George Khayyāṭ, returned to the Wafd at this time. They probably hoped to take over the name and organization, because most again left when they found that this would be impossible. Khayyāṭ was one of two who stayed. Other new members were admitted to the Wafd, including Murqus Ḥannā, who was personally recommended by Zaghlūl.[44] Wīṣā Wāṣif and Wāṣif Ghālī published announcements stating the Wafd's determination to continue the fight.[45] Several Wafdists, including Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr, a wealthy Coptic landowner, published a manifesto

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42. D.W. Maḥfūẓāt Majlis al-Wuzarā'. Mawduᶜāt Majlis al-Niẓār. 13J. Saᶜd Zaghlūl w-al-Dustūr. Mufāwaḍāt al-Wafd al-Miṣrī, 22 April 1921.
43. W. Makram Ebeid, Complete Independence v. the Milner Scheme (London 1921) p.9.
44. FO.407/213, J395/395/16.
45. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 115 (1970): 128.

calling for a boycott of the British. Murqus Hannā was one of the more active members and was responsible for issuing several circulars and proclamations.[46] Wafdist activities made it difficult for any Ministry to function and, in July 1922, Murqus Hannā, George Khayyāt, Wāsif Ghālī and others were arrested and imprisoned. Arrests continued and every time Wafdist ranks were decimated, a new committee was formed. In late autumn, Rāghib 'Iskandar, ex-member of the secularist Democratic Party,[47] and the priest Butros Ghabryāl were among those actively campaigning for the Wafd in the Delta. Fakhrī, who became a member of the Wafd's inner circle in July 1922, was an active speaker. In December, another Copt, Sādiq Hinain, returned from a propaganda tour in Europe. Most of these activists were arrested at one time or another. In 1923 those under arrest and in exile were released. The Wafd then set about reorganizing itself and preparing for elections. Until the 1940s, when a new generation of politicians began to come forward, most important Wafdists had something to do with the party in this period.

On more than one occasion, Zaghlūl himself spoke of the brotherhood of Copts and Muslims. His tolerance and lack of any connection with pre-war communal tensions inspired both Copts to trust him and Muslims to welcome Coptic participation. It is

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46. He was doing this in conjunction with Salāma Mīkhā'īl. FO.407/193, E4241/61/16.

47. The Democratic party was founded in 1919 to advocate secularism and democratic government. The Copt, ʿAzīz Mīrhum, was Secretary-General of the party until its collapse in 1922. The party split over the issue of negotiations in 1921. A majority of the Executive sided with ʿAdli and, in a somewhat questionable manner, added several new members to thwart those members backing Zaghlūl. Rāghib 'Iskandar, then a member of the Executive, resigned and became a Wafdist. FO.407/186, No.35, Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby to Lord Curzon, 12 January 1920; Charles Smith, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, pp.177-81.

possible that he originally sought Coptic representation in the Wafd to prove that his organization was not fanatical or even religious:[48] but Copts who joined the party later were added because of the skills they possessed and the devotion to the cause they displayed.[49] Had these men been seen as representatives of their community, the Wafd would quickly have foundered in the aftermath of Zaghlūl's break with ʿAdli. Of course, talent was not the sole requirement for membership. The first Copts who joined the Wafd were members of prominent families which could be relied upon to contribute funds and rally support in their home province.

Some Copts chose their political allegiance on the basis of communal interests, and others looked first to Egyptian or personal interests.

No matter how much the Coptic press tried to manipulate Coptic opinion, the question of political commitment was, and would remain, an intensely personal one.

C. Divide and Rule

Contemporary Egyptian historiography generally attributes communal problems in the period 1882-1952 to a British policy of divide and rule.[50] This is what many people of the time actually believed. The Wafdist newspaper al-Balāgh wrote in one 1925 article that the

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48. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 115 (1970): 126. Some nationalists were eager to prove that their movement was not a religious one. At one April 1919 strike meeting, 'Azharī students demanded public recognition of this fact. FO.371/3717, 75215/24930/16.
49. One exception to this was the appointment of Murqus Hannā as Vice-President of the Central Committee, a move meant to counter the appointment of Yūsuf Wahbah as Prime Minister.
50. However, Egyptian historians vary in their willingness to recognize the existence of communal problems. Some cling tenaciously to the myth of undisturbed unity.

British had successfully relied on a policy of encouraging inter-communal hatred until Zaghlūl succeeded in uniting the Egyptians.[51] Even before the well-being engendered by the 1919 revolution, some Muslims and Copts claimed that the Egyptians, despite religious differences, had always lived in harmony; both dated discriminatory policies from the time of the British Occupation. This trend continued into the troubled 1950s; one compendium of Coptic grievances, which was published around 1951 and immediately banned, placed British policy at the root of the communal problem.[52] This testimony became a kind of article of faith. It is generally wise, if not fair, to blame internal problems on outsiders.

Although British rule eventually gave Muslims and Copts the pretext on which to unite, it was also an irritant to communal relations. The comments of Lord Cromer and Edward Lane on the degree of assimilation notwithstanding, the British regarded Copts and Muslims as two distinct communities. They did, after all, expect the Copts to understand that British rule was in their interest. There is little doubt that the British found the Copts useful. Both Cromer and those missionaries working in Egypt either believed or liked to pretend that the Occupation had saved the Copts from a massacre. While it is not untrue that 'Aḥmad ᶜUrabī, in the closing days of the 1881 revolt, tried to use religious feeling to rally supporters, it seems distinctly unlikely that the Copts were threatened with any kind of genocide. Cromer, anxious about the fate of the supposedly temporary Occupation, used alleged threats against the

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52. 'Aḥmad Shafīq, Ḥawliyāt Miṣr al-Siyāsiyya, vol2 (1925) (Cairo 1919), pp.449-50.
53. Zaghīb Mīkha'īl, Farriq Tasud! Al-Wahda al-Waṭaniyya w-al-'Akhlāq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo n.d.) p.10.

Copts to reinforce his superiors' determination to stay in Egypt. He never, for example, reported that some Copts opposed the Occupation;[53] and when he sent troops to Upper Egypt to extend British hegemony, his ostensible reason was to protect the Copts from the fanaticism of the Mahdi.[54] While the extent to which he personally believed that Muslim fanaticism presented a danger is unclear, it is certain that others believed it and that therefore it was a convenient instrument. Particularly in his last years as Agent, Cromer may have used religious tensions to advance both British interests and his own.[55]

Gorst, who felt that minorities were too frail a reed upon which to lean, disapproved of Cromer's tactic. Upon succeeding the latter, he hoped to make British rule "more sympathetic to Egyptians in general and to Muslims in particular".[56] The appointment of Butrus Ghālī as Prime Minister seemed to many to be an odd way of fulfilling this desire. Wilfred Blunt was one who saw the divide and rule principle at work here. Peter Mellini, Gorst's biographer, concurs and sees in the appointment an attempt to detach the Coptic community from the nationalist movement.[57] This seems unlikely; there was little Coptic support for the nationalists at this time, and Gorst had already earned Coptic enmity by his opposition to communal demands. It is

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53. Seikaly, The Copts, p.124.
54. Ibid., p.98.
55. Mellini, Sir Eldon Gorst, pp.125-8.
56. The London and Egyptian English-language press were unhappy with Gorst and wrote sympathetically about Coptic demands in the hope of embarrassing him. Ibid., pp.128, 144, 152, 208-13.
57. Ibid., pp.166-7. Ronald Storrs also thinks that Gorst advised the Khedive to appoint Ghālī, but he does not expand on his reasons for thinking this or on Gorst's possible motives. Ronald Storrs, Orientations (London 1945) p.71.

possible, of course, that Gorst hoped to mute that opposition and secure, at the same time, the good will of the influential missionaries. Perhaps the most plausible explanation, given the Khedive's role in the appointment and Gorst's initial objection to Ghālī, can be sought in the Khedive's desire to gain the support of those who were lost to the nationalists.

The most frequently given example of divide and rule between 1918 and 1952 is the appointment of Yūsuf Wahbah as Prime Minister in 1919.[58] This is portrayed as a British attempt to drive a wedge between Copt and Muslim nationalists. It is not an implausible picture; the British resented Coptic adherence to the nationalist movement, and the appointment at least potentially, risked raising inter-communal suspicions with violence an all-too-likely consequence. However, Coptic opposition to the nationalists would not have been a substantial help to the British because Coptic support was not essential to the success of the nationalist movement. Their opposition would, of course, have provided a fillip to the British, who could once again use their concern for Coptic safety to justify the Occupation. If the British did have an ulterior motive in appointing a Coptic Prime Minister, there is no mention of it in the correspondence between the Agency and London. ʿAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī feared that the intention of the British was only to distract the nationalists from more pressing matters, and certainly the nationalists did feel called upon to react to the appointment.[59]

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58. 'Anīs, Darāsāt Wathā'iq, I, p.50. DW Maḥfūẓāt Raqm 1, Makhtūṭ Raqm 5. Abd al-Raḥman Fahmī's Memoirs, 3 December 1919, p.625. It was Fahmī who arranged for Murqus Ḥannā's appointment as Vice-President of the Central Committee.
59. 'Anis, Darāsāt Wathā'iq, I, pp.50-1.

However, most suspicions about British motives fall prey to the realization of how difficult it then was to fill the post of Prime Minister. The nationalists wanted to keep the office vacant, thereby depriving the Milner Mission of a government with which to talk. Volunteers for the post were few; Yūsuf Wahbah was not even the first choice,[60] but the Foreign Office feared that the Sultan would abdicate or be assassinated if they failed to name a Prime Minister.[61] Wahbah was the best the British could do in a very difficult situation; no doubt with their eagerness to win acceptance of the Milner Mission they would have preferred a Muslim Prime Minister with more political credibility. There was curiously little consultation within the British government before the appointment was made. Allenby does not seem to have discussed the matter with the Foreign Office, perhaps a sign of limited options. London was worried by Wahbah's lack of influence and character, but feared mainly that his religion would draw more fire than a Prime Minister co-operating with the British could then expect to draw. Although Wahbah had served in many Cabinets, including his predecessor's, he was a colourless political figure and not one around whom even the Copts would rally.[62] He answered well the instructions of one wit to those forming Cabinets: "Parmi les Coptes, cherchez la nullité".[63]

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60. Sirrī Pasha declined the post.
61. FO.371/3720, 145201/24930/16.
62. In the opinion of Murqus Simaika, Wahbah had shown no interest in the concerns of his community since the early 1890s and was of no use to the Copts as a Cabinet Minister. FO.371/3711, 12835/1180/16.
63. FO.371/3717, 75210/24930/16.

It is likely that Muhammad Saʿīd, Wahbah's predecessor, bears part of the responsibility for the appointment. The two men were close[64] and this was one way Saʿīd could maintain his influence. Saʿīd did not want to be blamed for talking with the Milner Mission, and the British had known that in sending the Mission they courted his resignation.[65] It was much safer for Saʿīd to resign and let Wahbah suffer the opprobrium attached to collaborating with the British.

The Coptic response to the appointment was swift and sharp; perhaps the Copts feared, as ʿAbd al-Rahman Fahmī suggested, that their new-found unity with Muslims would founder on the rock of Yūsuf Wahbah.[66] Misr roundly condemned Wahbah, and Sinūt, in particular, attacked him in the paper's pages.[67] Wīsā Wasif and other Copts insisted that Wahbah did not represent the community. At one November meeting, called and chaired by a representative of the Patriarchate, 2,000 Copts came to protest.[68] The speakers, including Murqus Sergius, praised national unity and swore to disavow anyone who accepted Cabinet office. The meeting telegraphed to Wahbah a demand for his resignation.[69] Similar meetings were held in churches all over Egypt, and fraternization between Copts and Muslims was particularly marked at this time.

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64. Qalīnī Fahmī, whose comments on colleagues must be viewed with caution, suggested in January 1919 that Yūsuf Wahbah had risen to high office by bribing Muhammad Saʿid. FO.371/3711, 12835/1180/16.
65. FO.371/3720, J153490/24930/16.
66. 'Anīs, Darāsāt Wathā'iq, vol.1, p.51.
67. See Misr, 22 November 1919, p.1.
68. Egyptian Mail, 25 November 1919, p.1.
69. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Rafīʿī, Thawrat Sannat 1919, Vol.2 (Cairo 1946) p.82.

Copts sent several delegations to remonstrate with Wahbah, and many Egyptians wrote him threatening letters.[70] Several hundred Copts signed a document repudiating him and any man who co-operated with the Protectorate. They also condemned the British for trying to make it appear that the Copts approved of the Cabinet and its policy.[71] At no point did those Muslims who disapproved of Wahbah attack him on sectarian grounds. Many newspapers insisted that the Cabinet was not a Coptic Cabinet, and they recalled their strong attacks on the Muhammad Saʿīd Ministry.[72]

There was some support for Wahbah. The conservative al-Watan commented that unity was perhaps not as strong as the Copts liked to think if they felt compelled to go to such great lengths to repudiate a Coptic Prime Minister.[73] The paper wondered why Wahbah should bear the brunt of the attack when his Muslim colleagues were just as responsible, but clearly there could be no government without a Prime Minister. Al-Watan had supported the Saʿīd Ministry, so its attitude toward Wahbah was not a departure occasioned by his religion. At no point did the paper suggest that the Copts should support the Cabinet because Wahbah was a Copt. Whatever the ulterior motive of the British, if there was one, Wahbah's appointment may actually have strengthened Coptic-Muslim unity. In later years, no British action would be needed to make the beast of sectarian conflict rear its ugly head.

In December 1919, an unsuccessful attempt was made on Wahbah's life by Iryān Yūsuf Saʿd, a Coptic student. Iryān had joined a

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70. The Times (London), 2 December 1919, Times Clippings on Egypt, p.20.
71. Egyptian Mail, 25 November 1919, p.1.
72. See al-'Ahālī, quoted in the Egyptian Mail, 28 November 1919, p.2.
73. Al-Watan, 24 November 1919, p.2.

secret society called the Black Hand, but his immediate superiors appear to have been working at the behest of ʿAbd al-Rahman Fahmī's secret apparatus.[74] He volunteered for the assassination knowing that if a Muslim killed the Prime Minister, intercommunal problems could result. Wahbah was a target solely because he formed a government at a time when the nationalists wanted to prevent any government from being formed. However, his would-be assassin may have feared that Wahbah endangered the standing of the Copts.

After doing his best to avoid taking any stand on Egypt's future, Wahbah resigned in May 1920. It is not clear why he chose to accept an obviously dangerous position. Perhaps he felt that British gratitude would secure his political future; instead, it effectively ruined it. Not even the British were happy when they learned that Wahbah would be a member of a negotiating delegation the Sultan was trying to form in 1921. They knew he was a British creature and could not even represent the Copts.[75]

The British may have practised divide and rule without having a conscious and malicious policy to that effect. 'Akhnūkh Fānūs complained in a letter to the Agency in 1906 that the British were making a "religious consideration the basis of a civil distinction in Egypt".[76] There is evidence that the British perpetuated and extended divisions which already existed in some form better to administer India; did they also do this in Egypt? India is a

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74. When Zaghlūl formed a Cabinet, Iryān was pardoned and put on salary. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 115 (1970): 135; Mustafā 'Amīn, al-Kitāb al-Mamnūʿ: 'Asrār Thawrat 1919, vol.1 (Cairo 1976), pp.133-4.
75. FO.371/6293, E2839/260/16.
76. Coptic Archaeological Society. ox C1: Coptic Question 1. Letter from A. Fānūs to Harry Boyle, November 1906.

useful point of comparison because the Egyptians themselves often compared their country to India. In the latter case, the British saw ethnic and religious divisions as natural ones and made use of them to govern a large and politically fragmented area; as Kenneth Jones has pointed out, sometimes the British in India were most influential when they only hoped to administer and not influence. He noted one example, that of the census, which listed people by ethnic category and therefore helped institutionalize social divisions and created a mentality in which numbers were equated with strength.[77] For a time, the British in India organized army units by ethnic group. They also instituted communal electorates which gave rise to communal organizations making communal demands. Not all such measures were taken for administrative ease. Some clearly were designed to check Indian nationalism.[78] The Indians no doubt were conscious of religious differences, but whether these would become as politically viable as they did without British encouragement is not clear.

The Indian and Egyptian situations were not identical. The Muslims were 30 per cent of India's population; their numbers gave them a greater claim on British attention than the Copts had. In addition, there were areas in which Muslims were in a majority. The Asian subcontinent was less easy to rule than Egypt with a strong central government and accessible geography. Despite Fānūs' claim, religion had been used to make civil and administrative

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77. Kenneth Jones, Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in the Nineteenth-century Punjab (Berkeley 1976), p.317. The Egyptian Census also broke the population down into religious groups.
78. One example is Lord Curzon's 1904 creation, over the objections of many Muslims and all Hindus, of Muslim and Hindu provinces in the previously united Bengal. Some scholars see this as an attempt to foster Muslim at the expense of Hindu Power. Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhard, The Communal Triangle in India (Allahabad 1942), pp.54, 75.

distinctions in Egypt. The British cannot wholly be blamed if they accepted the fact that religious divisions had political importance; some Egyptians, in fact, continued to argue that religious divisions should be used as political determinants.[79] The Copts were a conscious community, feeling more in common with one another than a Bengali Muslim may have felt with a Punjabi Muslim. Because of the nature of their history and that of their country, they may also have felt more loyalty to an entity called Egypt than a Bengali Muslim to an entity called India.

The British occupied Egypt to end chaos, improve an inefficient and debt-ridden administration, forestall foreign intervention and protect communications with India. It was in their interest therefore to maintain a stable and peaceful government. A policy of encouraging ethnic conflict, with its potential for escalation into violence which could spark outside intervention could well have been counter-productive to British aims. Any Muslim backlash against Coptic Christians could eventually have included foreign Christians whose home governments might have been keen to become involved. The 1919 solidarity between Muslims and Copts may even be construed, as Wingate pointed out, as a tribute to British even-handedness and the absence of any attempt on their part to sow discord.[80] Not even the magnetism of Gandhi could bring Muslims and Hindus together after years of British encouragement of Muslims demands. The British, in fact, were not nearly as receptive to Coptic demands in Egypt as they were to Muslim ones in India. Nor, at 10 per cent of the population, were the Copts very useful as an administrative division.

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79. See Kyriakus Mikhail's letter to The Times, 20 September 1910, reprinted in FO.371/894, 38033/38033/16. Another one who felt that Muslims and non-Muslims should be separated administratively was an interpreter in the Mixed Court of Appeals in Alexandria. FO.371/3717, 82216/24930/15.
80. FO.371/3711, J1235/1180/16.

If the British government did not practise a deliberate policy of divide and rule, it sometimes let the Egyptian government or the latter's opponents make unhindered use of the ethnic weapon. It seems only to have intervened when it feared that foreign Christian lives or orderly administration were threatened. Examples of ethnic appeals and the British reaction to them are discussed in Chapter Seven.

D. Anglo-Egyptian Treaty Negotiations

1. Independence and the Reserved Point for the Protection of Minorities

Britain's decision to extend formal protection to Egypt's minorities was, as nationalists argued, potentially the most divisive action the British had taken. The latter, however, saw it as a partial cure for the divisions inherent in Egyptian society. They were genuinely concerned, in the wake of the Armenian massacres, for the safety of Middle Eastern minorities. In addition, missionaries in Egypt pushed the British government to protect their new converts and other Egyptian Christians. The Curzon draft treaty, presented to Sultan Fu'ād in December 1921, detailed civil rights for Egypt's minorities.[81] Although these negotiations were unsuccessful, the Egyptian negotiating team did accept the draft's list of civil liberties.

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81 The rights in the Curzon draft, the relevant portions of which are included below, were modelled on those in the Treaty of Sèvres and were more explicit than those included in the Egyptian Constitution:

24. Egypt undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Egypt, without distinction of birth nationality, language, race or religion.

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In February 1922, when Britain unilaterally granted Egyptian independence, it reserved certain prerogatives for itself. The third Reserved Point gave Britain the right to intervene in Egyptian affairs to protect minorities and foreigners. Although the clause may have been deliberately vague to allow Britain a wide latitude for interference, the government does not appear to have defined clearly the protection it was offering. One confused official in the Residency noted that the guarantees in the Curzon draft had been included in haste and at the last moment; that they had had "nothing definite in mind when they inserted it".[82] Eventually, agreement did emerge that the protection provided in the draft treaty should guide British intervention on behalf of minorities.[83] At no time between 1922

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81. (continued from previous page)

> All inhabitants of Egypt shall be entitled to the free exercise, whether public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, whose practices are not inconsistent with public order or public morals.
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> 25. All Egyptian nationals shall be equal before the law, and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion.
>
> Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Egyptian national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours or the exercise of professions and industries.
>
> 26. Egyptian nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Egyptian nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establishment, manage and control, at their own expense, charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.

82. FO.141/452, 14544/5/22.
83. FO.141/452, 14544/1/22.

and the conclusion of the 1936 treaty did the British construe the reservation as merely affording the Copts the protection of life and limb. The Residency often interfered to protect the community's autonomy and integrity.

Coptic opposition to the reserved point was vehement; even al-Watan condemned it.[84] The Copts insisted that they were not a minority and that any division made between Copts and Muslims was artificial.[85] They feared that this reservation would destroy national unity and serve as a ready excuse for interference in Egyptian affairs.[86] Salāma Mikhā'īl wrote a pamphlet condemning this reservation, and Copts protested in many parts of Egypt. In one important meeting in St. Peter's church in Cairo in May, leading Coptic and Muslim Wafdists attacked all the reserved points and demanded the return of their exiled leaders.

Given the frequent declarations of unity, the British could not have been surprised by the Coptic reaction. In 1921 British negotiators had heard the Coptic ex-Minister Yūsuf Sulīmān Pasha argue that there were no minorities and no majorities in Egypt.[87] In the 1924 negotiations, the British showed some willingness to drop their claim to protection. In April a memorandum prepared for the Cabinet noted that the Copts had joined the nationalists and had secured generous representation in both Parliament and the Cabinet and had also obtained adequate protection in the Constitution.[88] Allenby, sharing this view,

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84. Al-Watan, 11 March 1922, p.1.
85. Misr, 5 March 1922, p.1.
86. Al-Watan, 6 March 1922, p.2.
87. Misr, 15 February 1939, pp.1, 10.
88. FO.371/10040, E3242/368/16.

suggested that the claim of protection was an embarrassment rather than an advantage. He noted that it had acquired a false importance in Egyptian minds and suggested the British drop it.[89] A draft agreement drawn up by the Foreign Office in September did not mention minorities. Zaghlūl, however, raised the subject. In the second of three conversations he had with Ramsey MacDonald, he asked the British to abandon their protection of minorities.[90] MacDonald did not reply; it was the issue of the Sudan, however, that brought the negotiations to an end.

Neither Prime Minister Tharwat's 1927 draft treaty nor the Foreign Office's amended version mentioned minorities. It would seem that the British government felt that the Egyptian Constitution adequately protected the civil rights of all Egyptians. During the 1929 Mahmūd-Henderson negotiations, the British government submitted a draft Note recognizing that the protection of minorities was the exclusive concern of the Egyptian government.[91] The subject was revived within British circles during the 1930 negotiations,[92] but it was not formally discussed by the negotiators.[93] Both Makram ʿUbaid and Wāsif Ghālī opposed any mention of minorities in the treaty.[94] However,

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89. FO.371/10042, E6661/368/16.
90. This meeting was held on 29 September. FO.371/10042, E8440/368/16.
91. For the text see FO.371/13850, J3287/5/16.
92. The Egypt Inter-Mission Council suggested that the Egyptian government send a Note saying that the Egyptians would respect the liberties guaranteed by their constitution. Booth, the Judicial Adviser, thought it unwise to press Egyptian delegates on this issue. FO.141/626. 223/7/30, 223/9/30, 223/13/30; FO.141/771, 405/6/31. 405/7/31.
93. FO.141/771, 405/6/31.
94. FO.141/6262, 223/40/30/

paragraph 14 of a Note attached to the Egyptian counter-draft clearly stated the responsibility of the Egyptian government for its own minorities.[95]

Even after the 1930 negotiations ended in failure, missionaries continued to argue that Egyptian responsibility was contingent on the assumption that the Egyptian government adequately protected religious liberty. Because it had never done so, the missionaries wanted the issue raised at future negotiations.[96] During the 1936 negotiations, the Egypt Inter-Mission Council insisted that the treaty recognize the protection of minorities as a legitimate British concern. The Council claimed, possibly with some accuracy, that Egyptian Christians who had been happy with the Egyptian Note in 1930 were not happy with it now.[97] The Foreign Office was reluctant to raise the issue after it had already dropped it and so tried to placate the missionaries by suggesting an Egyptian guarantee to the League of Nations.[98] After the treaty, which made no mention of minorities, was signed in 1936 and Egypt applied for League membership, missionaries began lobbying for an Egyptian promise to the League.[99] The British government pressed the Egyptian government to make a voluntary statement concerning minority rights to the League, but al-Nahḥās declined to make any statement

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95. FO.371/14612. J1432/4/16.
96. FO.141/626, 223/42/30/
97. FO.141/613, 376/1/36.
98. FO.141/613, 376/4/36. The idea of a guarantee to the League was discussed as early as 1931. FO.141/771, 405/6, 7/31.
99. The missionaries, who had the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, were thinking along the lines of a similar Iraqi promise made to the League.

which he saw as admitting the right of other bodies to intervene in Egypt's domestic affairs.[100] ʿUbaid was said to be adamantly opposed to any statement because he feared the Copts would be accused of seeking foreign protection.

The Copts were not unanimous in rejecting a need for protection. In 1935, Murqus Sergius suggested that the Copts would be better off if the British remained in Egypt. He claimed that the British had filled a necessary function in protecting minorities, and he remarked on the hypocrisy of Egyptian Muslims supporting those Indian Muslims who objected to rule by the Hindu majority.[101] Increasingly, Copts came to share his view. In the period after World War II, they were alarmed by growing hostility in the Muslim community. Misr demanded that the new treaty being contemplated in 1946 include a clause protecting equal rights for minorities.[102] Misr also proposed that a new constitution separating religion and state be drafted in tandem with a new treaty. The paper added that the Copts had to be certain that British evacuation would not be at their expense before they could support it.[103] The Embassy noted that it had received a number of petitions from Copts expressing anxiety about the consequences of British withdrawal;

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100. FO.371/23365, J2869/1342/16.
101. Al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 18 February 1935, pp.3-5. Prior to this, in 1933 during an anti-missionary campaign, Sergius said he feared that the Copts who had supported British withdrawal had done so only to find that the Muslims wished to rule Egype alone. Al-Siyāsa condemned Sergius for this comment which it said suggested that the Copts ought to prefer a continuing British presence in Egypt. See al-Siyāsa, 10 July 1933, p.4.
102. Misr's reason was that the constitution named Islam the religion of state. Misr, 29 November 1946, p.1.
103. Misr, 15 April 1946, p.1.

many Copts appear to have held the unspoken hope that the 1946 negotiations would break down.[104] In 1947 Misr criticized ᶜUbaid for trying to arrange independence for Egypt. The paper said that it was wrong to discuss the deliverance of Egyptians from British until they had secured the deliverance of Egyptians from Egyptians.[105]

Coptic fears raise the question of how much protection the British actually afforded the community. The Copts, as previously noted, frequently called on British help to resolve internal communal problems and also problems vis-à-vis the government. The British, although annoyed by Coptic importuning, acted when the government planned to strengthen the hand of the clerical party or increase its own power over the Copts. British actions were often decisive in persuading the government to abandon such plans. In 1933, the British government even discussed whether their obligation to protect minorities compelled them to intervene to secure religious instruction for Christian students in government schools.[106]

There was little the British could do to prevent sporadic violence against the Copts, although they sometimes tried.[107] After the 1936 treaty, the Embassy showed less interest in defending the Copts. In 1947 one Foreign Office official minuted that, as far as they were concerned, Egypt's responsibility to

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104. FO.371/53331, J2368/57/16. FO.371/53304, J2076/39/16.
105. Misr, 15 April 1947, p.3.
106. FO.371/17032, J1647/1647/16. See Chapter Six for further discussion of this topic.
107. In one early example, the British pressed the Egyptian government in 1853 to stop the Cairene ᶜulamā' from fanning fanaticism. Samir Seikaly, The Copts under British Control, p.20.

the Copts was set only "by her duties as a member of the UN, by the freedom accorded under her own constitution and by the conscience of her Ministers.[108] Some Britons felt that the Copts were better off without foreign guarantees and that it was unwise of the Copts to lean too heavily on British support in arguments with the government. The Embassy continued to report on inter-communal relations, a sign of at least nominal concern. In 1950 there was some Anglican church pressure on the Foreign Office to safeguard religious liberties in a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty.[109] However, the Foreign Office could hardly demand new powers when the purpose of a new treaty was to reduce the old ones. Ironically, British inaction came at a time when the Copts were increasingly eager for British action. As early as 1938, one Embassy official on a visit to Upper Egypt recorded Coptic anger at the British for failing to represent their interests. He reported a year later that the Copts were still anxious about the future;[110] it was an anxiety that grew throughout the following decade.

2. The Politics of Treaty Negotiations

No better marker of the assumptions Muslims made about the attitude of the Copts to the British exists than the public discussion of treaty negotiations. Because of this, all negotiating teams were careful to balance Muslim and Copt members.[111]

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108. FO.371/63029. J802/152/16.
109. Misr, 9 October 1950, p.1.
110. FO.407/224, Enclosure in No.2. A Report on a Visit to Upper Egypt by Mr. Hamilton, December 1939.
111. The British could explain the presence of ʿUthmān Muharram on the 1930 negotiating team only by saying that he was needed to prevent the Coptic members from being in the majority. The delegation was later expanded. FO.371/14607, J635/4/16.

Popular assumptions had either receded or simply were not played upon until the 1929 negotiations. Then the Liberal Constitutionalists, fearing that the Wafd would sabotage their treaty, made the supposed reliance of the Copts on the British an issue. They tried to pin opposition to the treaty on the Copts and specifically on the Copts in the Wafd. This new charge was simply an extension of one made frequently in the past by al-Siyāsa, as the paper itself admitted.[112] Muslims, in al-Siyāsa's view, had no influence in the party and al-Nahhās was "nothing but a zero on the left side or an instrument in ᶜUbaid's hand".[113]

Al-Siyāsa suggested that the Copts were as concerned as foreign communities in Egypt with what special promises would be made to them in the treaty.[114] The Copts, concluded the paper, did not want a treaty because a British evacuation would leave them at the mercy of Muslims.[115] Such statements apparently played on British fears as much as public ones. Every time the Wafd negotiated with the British, the Residency suspected that the Copts in the party would sabotage the talks.

Al-Siyāsa, charging the Copts with monopolizing power in the administration, reminded its readers that the Copts had recently held two portfolios and the presidency of the Senate.[116] It also complained of other prominent jobs in Coptic hands[117] and

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112. Al-Siyāsa, 8 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
113. Al-Siyāsa, quoted in Mustafa al-Fekki, "Makram Ubayd: A Coptic Leader in the Egyptian National Movement", unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1977, p.111.
114. Al-Siyāsa, 8 September 1929, Palace Press Files
115. Al-Siyāsa, 29 and 30 May 1929, Palace Press Files.
116. Al-Siyāsa, 11 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
117. Al-Siyāsa, 17 September 1929, Palace Press Files.

contended that some high positions should be reserved for Muslims. To forestall doubts, al-Siyāsa assured its readers that it was not prejudiced against the Copts, and incorrectly claimed that the Liberal Constitutionalist party had more Coptic members than the Wafd.[118]

Al-Siyāsa's attacks soon grew ugly. The paper invented a story about Upper Egyptian tax collectors, almost all Copts, making propaganda against the treaty. It reported that these collectors were terrifying the peasantry with talk that a treaty would spark first widespread Egyptian military conscription and then war in Ethiopia on behalf of the British.[119] The peasants, remembering their treatment at the hands of the British during World War I, were not eager to repeat the experience. The collectors were also accused of claiming that the British planned to deprive Egypt of much of her water by irrigating the Sudan. Water was a delicate issue and one which easily aroused peasant fears.[120] Apparently the government, to maximize its political gains, ordered al-Siyāsa's articles against the Copts to be printed in a brochure and distributed.[121]

The fact that the Liberals could think of no other weapon against Wafdist opposition to the treaty indicates a bankruptcy of policy, if not support. No doubt Wafdist agents were working against the treaty, but it is unlikely that the Wafd would have

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118. Al-Fekki, "Makram Ubayd....", op.cit., p.111.
119. The fighting was supposed to take place because of an argument over the headwaters of the Nile. Misr, 8 September, p.2, 1929.
120. Al-Siyāsa, 6 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
121. Journal du Caire, 18 September 1929, Palace Press Files.

relied on men who were bitterly hated by the peasantry. Even if a majority of Coptic tax collectors were Wafdists, it is just as unlikely that they would have risked their precious jobs by spreading anti-government propaganda. The British, surprisingly, gave some credence to the Liberals' tale, although they had no more proof than al-Siyāsa. Sir Percy Loraine thought the Copts in the Wafd might wreck the treaty because the British had relinquished their insistence on protecting minorities.[122]

Makram ʿUbaid was blamed for the Wafd's refusal to announce its opinion on the draft treaty.[123] He was singled out by al-Siyāsa, not only because he was a Copt and Secretary-General of the Wafd, but because he had just returned from an anti-treaty propaganda mission to London.[124] Upon his return, a leaflet was distributed in Alexandria claiming that the Copts, wishing to destroy the treaty, had contributed E£10,000 to his mission.[125] Every issue of al-Siyāsa in mid-September criticized ʿUbaid, and the latter felt compelled to deny publicly al-Siyāsa's charges.[126]

Al-Siyāsa accused the Copts of secretly plotting to use the nationalist movement to gain power over Muslims.[127] The newspaper Al-Thaghr, in repeating such stories, warned that the majority would not submit to Coptic domination.[128] Other papers, including Al-'Akhbār and Avenir, joined the anti-Coptic outburst. Curiously,

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122. FO.371/13847, J2615/5/16.
123. Al-Siyāsa, 11 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
124. See al-Siyāsa, 6 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
125. Al-Fekki, "Makram Ubayd....", op.cit., p.110.
126. Misr, 17 September 1929, p.3.
127. Of course, only fanatical Copts joined the Wafd. Al-Siyāsa, 17 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
128. Egyptian Gazette, 14 September 1929, p.2; FO.407/209, Enclosure in No.33, Memorandum respecting the Egyptian Press, 7-13 September 1929.

al-Siyāsa was at the same time claiming that the Wafd, no doubt meaning the Muslim Wafd as distinct from the Coptic Wafd, was actually pleased with the treaty.[129]

Misr, al-Muqattam and al-Balāgh responded with particular sharpness to these charges. The latter commented that the great nationalist, Zaghlūl, had united Muslims and Copts and it accused al-Siyāsa of serving British policy in trying to divide the two.[130] Al-Muqattam also harked back to the glorious days of solidarity and warned those who dragged religion into the treaty debate that it could lead to civil strife (fitna).[131] Misr, as befitted a Coptic and Wafdist newspaper, made the most vigorous defence of the Copts and the strongest attack on the Ministry for fostering a communal policy. The paper condemned al-Siyāsa's attempt to destroy national unity. Like al-Balāgh, Misr suggested that the Liberals were not so much protecting Islam and Muslims, as they were advancing their own political interests.[132]

In 1930, the Wafd came to power and Wīsā Wāsif, the new President of the Chamber, portrayed his election as a repudiation of the Liberals' anti-Coptic campaign.[133] However, al-Siyāsa continued this campaign and in March was pointlessly accusing Coptic tax collectors of working against the Wafd's treaty negotiations.[134] Understandably, the charge was subdued. It

129. Misr, 17 September 1929, p.3.
130. Al-Balāgh, 30 May 1929, Palace Press Files.
131. Al-Mutattam, 11 September 1929, Palace Press Files.
132. Misr, 13 September 1929, p.1.
133. Misr, 15 January 1930, p.1. Al-Siyāsa complained that only Coptic societies had been given notice of the celebrations scheduled for the opening of Parliament.
134. Misr, 7 March 1930, p.1.

made little sense to accuse Copts of blocking a treaty which the Wafd, supposedly dominated by Copts, was doing its best to secure. Al-Siyāsa even charged that Copts had too great a role in trying to secure the treaty that Copts at home opposed.[135] Religion did not colour all of al-Siyāsa's remarks about the negotiations; most of them were, in fact, directed at Wafdist recalcitrance.

The Residency was even more suspicious than al-Siyāsa. Sir Samuel Hoare in the Foreign Office minuted that nobody believed that the Copts wanted a change: "Makram will simply hold out for an unobtainable maximum in order that he and his brethren may continue to be patriots and heroes..."[136] It is possible that ᶜUbaid did feel obliged to maintain a more extreme position than his fellow Muslim delegates because his loyalty could more easily be questioned. His position on the treaty was, however, consonant with his reputation for extreme nationalism; there is no evidence to suggest that he or any other Copts who negotiated with the British sabotaged any treaty because they desired a continuing British presence in Egypt.[137]

E. Conclusion

Paradoxically, then, the British presence in Egypt was both a restraint on and an encouragement of Muslim hostility to Copts. It was inevitable that some Muslims would identify the Copts with their British overlords because of the shared religion of the two. The

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135. Al-Siyāsa, 6 April 1930, p.1. See also 9 February.
136. FO.371/14611, J1308/4/16.
137. In fact, Makram was helpful in advancing the 1936 negotiations to their successful conclusion.

British expectation that Copts and Muslims would have different interests and would respond differently to the Occupation did not help the Copts secure good relations with their compatriots. The presence of British troops in the country probably was reassuring to many Copts; but the British disinclination to act after 1936, at a time when the community was increasingly threatened, left the British presence only as a provocation and aggravation of Muslim feeling without doing anything to secure Coptic safety and equality.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIMITS OF THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY AND EGYPT'S NATIONAL IDENTITY

A. Religion and the Political System

Perhaps the most fundamental effect of Western influence was to call into question the very foundation of Egyptian society and politics. Egyptian intellectuals were confronted with the problem of why their society and, in fact, others ruled by Muslims had failed to keep pace with those technological advances which had allowed the West to establish hegemony over the East. If Muslim society were innately inferior, as Europeans liked to think, what then did this say about Islam, at the heart of Egyptian and Arab civilization?

Europeans often blamed Islam for the backwardness of the Muslim world. Some Egyptians accepted this interpretation and were ready to condemn the religion in its entirety; others preferred to cast their stone at the role Islam had ideally and historically played in politics. Religious opinion, of whatever shade, was naturally concerned to prevent both this denigration and any corresponding praise, however implicit, of Christianity as responsible for European success.[1]

To identify the causes of the weakness was at the same time to suggest remedies. There was no consensus on either, except perhaps that some change was necessary. Remedies centred around what should be adopted from the West and what indigenous traditions could be

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1. Al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqā 4 (3 April 1884); reprinted in a volume of the same title (Cairo 1957), pp.23-6. The Firm Tie was the short-lived journal of Shaikhs al-'Afghānī and ʿAbduh.

profitably retained. Secularists, for example, constructed an entirely new foundation, based on reason and common interests, for politics and society. In their ideal society, religion was removed from the public sphere and restricted to the private. Traditional Muslims, on the other hand, upheld the older belief that Islam was inseparable from politics. The clear fact that the two were not then inseparable was blamed for the Islamic world's loss of independence;[2] Muslims had failed to follow the principles of their religion and were suffering the consequences. The ideal was a society organized around Islam and for the fundamental purpose of practising Islam. The boundaries of the political community were set by adherence to Islam and therefore could include only Muslims.

Those on the Islamic side of the fence differed among themselves on the amount of borrowing permissible.[3] However, there was some consensus that the kind of borrowing advocated by the secularists would create a poor Egyptian copy of Europe and would give the West a greater hold over the East. They would not abandon religious feeling as society's main bond,[4] and many saw only a purified and revitalized Islam as capable of defeating Western control and protecting the territorial and cultural integrity of the Muslim peoples.

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2. To Shaikh al-'Afghānī, one significant failure was that Muslims had not maintained unity, which he termed a religious obligation. Ibid., 9 (22 May 1884); reprinted on p.70 and ibid., 5 (10 April 1884); reprinted on pp.30-2.
3. Al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqā in noting that Western nations frequently borrowed from one another to their mutual benefit, criticized Eastern rulers for hindering that process. Ibid., 9 (22 May 1884); reprinted on p.71.
4. Al-'Afghānī scorned nationalism, which he saw as divisive, and he promoted religious solidarity as the only way to bring together the strength of the East and pit it successfully against the might of the West. Ibid., 2 (20 March 1884); reprinted on pp.9-11; ibid., 9 (22 May 1884); reprinted on pp.67-72.

One religious thinker who had some influence in this century was Rashīd Ridā. His journal, al-Manār, consistently called for a return to the simplicity of an earlier Islam, and a society in which the connection between religion and government was closer than it was in twentieth-century Egypt.[5] Ridā was concerned to give practical reasons for the Muslim world's backwardness; one article in al-Manār saw an explanation in moral depravity and the ignorance of science.[6] For Ridā, religion was the root of political and social cohesion. As a Syrian and devout Muslim, he wanted to rid the Middle East of non-Muslim rule, but not by means of separate nationalism. For example, al-Manār criticized the Liberal Constitutionalist al-Siyāsa for calling "a Muslim and an Arab....a foreigner if he does not belong to the same country as themselves".[7] Although Ridā's journal failed to survive his death in 1935, his views found new champions, most notably in the Muslim Brethren.

The more conservative Egyptian religious establishment also argued for Islam to be given more power over people's lives.[8] For them, this was a "bread and butter" issue; and they tended, like Ridā, to see nationality as determined by religion. Such thinking was interpreted, not without justice, by the Copts and even by the British, as saying that there was no real and meaningful place for non-Muslims in a Muslim country.

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5. E.I.J. Rosenthal, Islam in the Modern National State (Cambridge 1965), p.82. Al-Manār contained more articles on current affairs than the more strictly religious periodicals like Majallat al-'Azhar.
6. Al-Manār 31 (22 October 1930: 1349 AH): 449-65.
7. Quoted by Charles Adams in Islam and Modernism in Egypt (Cairo 1933), p.194.
8. They believed that there could be no struggle between religious and civil authorities as there had been in Europe because in Islam there was no division between the two. Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī, "The Office of Caliph and Democarcy", Majallat al-'Azhar 10 (1939: 1358 AH), 36-8.

A number of organizations, whose political strength was based partly on their religious commitment, advocated a greater say for religion in politics and criticized the more secular political parties for a lack of devotion to Islam. Misr al-Fatāt (Young Egypt), renamed the National Islamic Party in 1940, was one group that was vocal in its support of Islamic principles. It demanded, like the Shabāb Muhammad (Young Men of Muhammad) that Islamic religious law serve as the basis for legislative life. The latter, a splinter group of the Muslim Brethren, also advocated the replacement of Parliament by Islam's Majlis al-Shūrā (Consultative Council), the boycott of anything made or delivered by non-Muslims and the restitution of the jizya tax.[9]

The Shabāb were a fringe group, but the Muslim Brethren were not; and this latter organization, with its large following became the most powerful exponent of an Islamic order. In their eyes, any division between religious and political life was artificial,[10] and they blamed the West for denying Islam its right to rule.[11] Because the state existed only to serve religion,[12] the Brethren were critical of the

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9. Misr, 26 April 1946, p.1. When Salāma Mūsā complained about the Shabāb the following year, they accused him of trying to spark rebellion (Fitna), Misr, 3 May 1947, p.1.
10. Five Tracts of Hassan al-Bannā', trans. Charles Wendell (Berkeley 1978), p.6. The Brethren objected to mixing an alien system of government with Islam because it would ruin the natural ability of Islam to operate to the best advantage of mankind. See Sayed Kotb, Social Justice in Islam, trans. John Hardie (New York 1970) (first Arabic edition 1945), p.91. Another Brethren ideologue was moved by Islam's modernity to call its system of government "a free democracy" and "a tempered socialism". Muhammad al-Ghazzali, Our Beginning in Wisdom, trans. Ismaʿil al-Faruqi (Washington DC 1953) (first Arabic edition 1951), pp.6, 13.
11. Al-Bannā' argued, as did Rashīd Ridā, that a contributing factor was the transfer of power to non-Arabs who did not understand Islam. This is an argument several pan-Arabists made to account for the decline of the Arab world. Five Tracts of Hassan al-Bannā', p.19.
12. Richard Mitchell, The Society of Muslim Brothers (London 1969), p.247.

political elite for failing to protect Islam.[13] Much of their activity was directed against Western hegemony, and they made a strong claim at a time when the Wafd was losing credibility, to be considered the only genuine nationalists. It was a nationalism, however, that rested more on religious feeling than any sense of territorial identity.

The ideal of Islamic unity exerted a strong pull on some Muslims, for whom the wholly imaginary simplicity of an earlier time when the Muslim world was united was a compelling vision. One symbol of that unity was the Caliphate, the supreme Islamic religious office, abolished by the Turks in 1924. Many Muslims seemed eager to re-establish the position, and potential political gains as well as religious duty figured in their attempts. However, Egyptian public interest may have been due mainly to Egyptian royal pressure. The Caliph, had, after all, sat far away in Istanbul. As it was, public feeling was strong mainly in the few years following Turkey's unilateral action, although there was some renewal of sentiment when the young and seemingly pious Fārūq ascended the throne in 1936. Many of the ᶜulamā were sincere in their desire for a Caliph,[14] even

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13. Al-Nadhīr 1 (No.12: 1938/1357 AH): 2-3. In 1941, Prime Minister Husain Sirrī was so annoyed by al-Bannā''s criticism of his government that he banished the latter to Qīna. FO.141/838, 305/37/42.

14. Not even they, however, agreed on the need for a Caliph. In 1925 Shaikh ᶜAlī ᶜAbd al-Rāziq claimed in a book that neither the Qur'ān nor the Hadīth made the office incumbant upon Muslims. Religious circles reacted so vehemently to this that public and government attention was focused on the unfortunate Shaikh. Al-Manār and many others particularly objected to his claim that the establishment of a state was not a part of the Prophet's divine mission; this, of course, implied that a division between religion and politics was not only acceptable but ordained. Al-Manār noted indignantly that Muslims would have to give up one-half of their religion if they were to adopt al-Rāziq's understanding of Islam. Feeling was so strong that few of those who approved of al-Rāziq's words dared to defend them; most rather weakly argued for the right of free expression. Wisely, this is all the Coptic press attempted to do. See al-Waṭan, 20 August 1925, p.1; 5 September 1925, p.1. See also ᶜAlī ᶜAbd al-Rāziq, al-'Islām wa 'Usūl al-Hukm (Cairo 1925), pp.119-29. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p.267.

if their activity was conveniently tied to King Fu'ād and later Fārūq's ambition to be named Caliph.[15]

Neither the Wafd nor the Liberal party wanted an Egyptian Caliph. Both understood that no political party could compete with a Caliph-King whose political authority derived from religious rather than constitutional sources. It was not easy, however, to oppose the Caliphate and maintain a reputation for religiosity, particularly when each party was trying to denigrate the other's commitment to Islam.

The Copts were wary of the Caliphate and indeed all Islamic unity schemes. They also understood that Egypt could not survive as a semi-secular democratic system were its monarch named Supreme Commander of all Muslims. The Coptic press was justifiably cautious in its comments in the 1920s, when enthusiasm and hope for a revival were strongest.[16] Later, the Coptic press, if not frank, was at least more open in its concern; this mirrored the freedom the Wafd then felt to voice its convictions.[17]

All elements of the press wrote about Islamic issues such as this, and many devoted increasing space to them from the late 1930s. The party press could not afford to be left behind some of the more vigorous Islamic groups. Even the Wafdist press fell prey to this need; witness the name chosen for one of the later Wafdist newspapers, al-Jihād (The Holy War). In 1947, another Wafdist paper, al-Miṣrī, termed India's declaration of war against Pakistan a war against Islam. At the same moment, the Wafdist al-Balāgh, whose editor ᶜAbd al-Qādir Hamza, was

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15. See the description of 'Azharī activity in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ẓawāhirī, al-Siyāsa w-al-'Azhar (Cairo 1945), pp.209-17.
16. Both al-Watan and Miṣr restricted themselves to bland reporting on revival activities. See al-Watan, 5 March 1925, p.1; 13 March 1925, p.1.
17. Miṣr, 2 February 1938, p.1; al-Jihād, 23 January 1938, Palace Press Files.

for some years involved in Islamic-Arab affairs, was listing the advantages of Islamic unity. Salāma Mūsā was perhaps understandably moved to comment that it was no longer easy to distinguish between the Wafdist and Muslim Brethren press.[18] Several of the literati mirrored this press interest and, in the late 1930s, took up writing about traditional Islamic themes and heroes: some of these, like Muhammad Husain Haikal and Taha Husain, had promoted secular ideas in the past. It seems clear that this heightened interest in Islamic themes both responded to and encouraged the renewal of religious sentiment in Egypt.

Copts could have only a peripheral role in this debate about the nature of Egyptian society and politics, and therefore were partly excluded from an argument that had some effect on their position. Those with an interest in national affairs did tend to help Muslim secularists advance their cause. It was not that there were not important creative thinkers among them; there were, but it was simply that their right to a say was not accepted by the other side in the debate.

The traditional tie between Islam and government had precluded a non-Muslim role in defining the society or polity and had made the Copts marginal. Only by excluding religion from government or by the more personal act of conversion to Islam could the Copts escape their marginality. Secularism promised to broaden the political community and reduce the political and social importance of the division between Muslims and Christians. The Copts naturally saw the confusion of Islam and politics as something directly harmful to their interests;[19]

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18. He was no doubt worried about Brethren-Wafd contacts. Misr, 26 November 1947, p.1.
19. See Mīkhā'īl Fānūs' speech at The Coptic Conference Held at Assiout, 6, 7 and 8 March 1911, no place, n.d., pp.6-12.

it threatened both liberty and tolerance. Misr insisted that theocracy was anachronistic and that only secular democratic government was akin to the spirit of the age.[20] Salāma Mūsā, one of the most important Coptic secularists,[21] adhered to the Western concept of religion: both Islam and Christianity were meant to be religions of private faith and not government supervision. Both Misr and al-Watan consistently promoted the separation of religion and politics:

> The world knows....that the source of grief and war to humanity in phases of history has been the appeal of religion to politics and the refuge politics has found in religion. Peace and prosperity were established in a country only when politics and religion were kept apart.[22]

Of course, Christian advocacy of a Western orientation drew suspicion because the Copts, after all, shared a religion with the hated British. One contemporary scholar insists that the Copts should have recognized that Islam was "the chief safeguard of man's identity in that part of the world, the champion par excellence in the long conflict between East and West...," but they could not share his conclusion that doing so would lead to a common victory.[23]

There were, of course, many Muslims who also rejected the idea that Islam was a suitable basis for political life. They hoped that a Western democratic government would do for Egypt what others believed Islam could do: free Egypt and establish a more just and egalitarian

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20. Misr, 22 January 1938, p.1.
21. Syrian Christians, because of their disproportionate press influence, played a perhaps larger role than the Copts in promoting secular ideas in Egypt.
22. Al-Watan, 21 September 1922, p.1.
23. Jacques Berque, Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution, trans. Jean Stewart (London 1972), p.261.

society. Lutfī al-Sayyid was one of the first to help lay a foundation for a polity in which Muslims and Copts could participate on an equal basis.[24] He rejected pan-Islamic unity as far-fetched, and believed that only common interests, which were determined largely by shared geographic space, could unite men. Among those intellectuals who shared his bent were Haikal, Ṭaha Ḥusain, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Maḥmud ʿAzmī and Khālid Muḥammad Khālid. Their society was one in which reason would guide action and religion fill spiritual needs.[25]

It was the secularists who dominated politics in the 1920s. The British example and presence no doubt gave them a powerful boost. The two major political groups of this decade, and perhaps the era, the Wafd and Liberal Constitutionalist parties, were founded as secular organizations aimed at obtaining power within the framework of a democratic system. Neither, however, was able to resist the occasional temptation to make improper political use of religious issues; they were not so unlike the royalist parties in this.[26] Two later political groups, the Saʿdist party and the Wafdist Bloc were both splinter groups of the Wafd and adhered to its secular ideas. Almost all parties, however, capitulated to the strong religious feelings evident in the 1940s. It is interesting to speculate whether the Coptic politician Makram ʿUbaid became at this time a peculiarly rabid anti-British nationalist precisely because he could not use Islam and

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24. Salāma Mūsā commented that it was Lutfi's work which allowed him to be a nationalist in Egypt, The Education of Salama Musa, trans. by L.O. Schuman (Leiden 1961), p.44.
25. Al-Siyāsa, 24 July 1926, p.5; Ibrahim Ibrahim, "The Egyptian Intellectuals between Tradition and Modernity" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford 1967), pp.95, 104-5.
26. This subject will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

needed something to equal its intensity. It was the manifest strength of these feelings that forced the Copts out of the political arena and left few Muslim secularists with the courage both to defend and encourage Coptic participation. It was not that the religious thinkers had finally defeated the secularists, but the balance seemed definitely to have shifted.

B. Theories of History and National Unity

History has always had a role in defining a people and making them proud of their character. Rarely has it been a simple rendering of a factual past; rather it is usually a part of the present and is moulded by present needs. Many Egyptian intellectuals of this era were absorbed by the question of who the Egyptians were and how they defined their heritage. Egyptian history was long and splendid, but not all parts of it were equally appealing to all readers. Some rejected segments of that history for political or religious reasons,[27] others neglected parts through sheer ignorance. Some described the inhabitants of the Nile Valley as Arabs and others as Egyptians, Muslims or Europeans. As Mirrit Ghali has suggested, this inability to agree on an identity is partly due to a tendency to see Egypt's historical periods as self-contained and mutually exclusive.[28]

This problem of competing definitions was not a negligible one. Membership in the Egyptian nation could be made exclusive, and the excluded could eventually lose their right to participate in politics. Egypt had been defined, and still was by many, as a Muslim country. The Copts could not belong to a culture or polity defined by Islam.

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27. Lecture by Mirrit Ghali at l'Institut d'Egypte, 7 November 1977.
28. Mirrit Ghali, "Essay: The Egyptian National Consciousness", Middle East Journal 32 (1978) 59-60.
28a. Wendell and Walter Freeman (eds.), Ethnicity and Nation-Building (Beverly Hills 1974), p.295.

Coptic and Muslim secularists tried, partly through their use of history, to base the Egyptian identity on something other than religion. Coptic efforts contributed toward the development of a theory of Egyptian character which included Muslims and Copts and ignored the one source of division between the two, religion.

1. Egyptianism

There were several important Egyptian nationalists, Lutfī al-Sayyid and Zaghlūl among them who sought to build a nationalism based on Egypt as a territorial entity and to impose this modern allegiance on the older one. In pursuit of this objective, they proposed that the Egyptian character was unique; sharing some traits with other peoples, but still possessing a particular identity based on a particular historical experience. Some nationalist thinkers began with Pharaonic Egypt and tried to reconcile this civilization with subsequent periods. Others concentrated solely on the Pharaonic heritage and neglected 1,300 years of Egypt's Arab and Islamic history. Whatever the emphasis and however great the recognition of historical continuity, ancient Egypt was an age in which most Egyptians could take pride. A polity which was sovereign and powerful and a civilization which was advanced gave some promise of the heights to which Egypt could legitimately aspire.[29]

Sparked by excavations beginning in the last century and fuelled by the discovery of Tut Ankh Amun's tomb in 1922, interest in the Pharaonic past became an intellectual infatuation in the 1920s.[30] Many Muslims were ready to praise Pharaonic civilization and its attainments. With the exception of Salāma Mūsā, they were, in fact, the chief

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29. Charles Wendell, The Evolution of Egypt's National Image (Los Angeles 1972), p.123.
30. See Misr, 20 and 27 February 1927, p.1.

exponents of Pharaonism or the idea that the Egyptian character was inextricably bound to the Pharaonic spirit. Lutfī al-Sayyid was perhaps the first to suggest that the Egyptian character was built around a Pharaonic core. The Copts, however, were among the first to show an interest in and an identification with Egypt's ancient heritage; and the Coptic press was an important vehicle for conveying information about the Pharaonic period. Certain European Egyptologists like Gaston Maspero, seem partly, if not wholly, responsible for persuading the Copts that they were direct descendants of this impressive civilization.[31] Maspero suggested that Egyptian Muslims were largely Christians who had converted to Islam, but who also lacked the racial purity of the Copts.[32] Egyptian Muslims, then, were a kind of substandard Copt, a notion which would not have pleased the country's majority. The Assyriologist A.H. Sayce went even further with his extravagant insistence, apparently shared by Flinders Petrie, that the Copts, because of their glorious past, held Egypt's future in their hands.[33]

These ideas were discussed with great excitement by the Copts. Ramzī Tādrus stated in his biographical dictionary that the Copts were a nation covered in glory.[34] A heritage of power and high culture was naturally more exciting than one of bondage and subservience, and was to

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31. An interview with Maspero in a Coptic periodical and a lecture he gave at the Ramses Club in 1908 were both seminal in conveying to the Copts the idea that the blood line had remained pure from the time of the Pharaohs. Samir Seikaly, "Coptic Communal Reform 1860-1914", Middle Eastern Studies 6 (1970), 269. Before this time, the Copts, like the Muslims, were not interested in ancient Egypt. See Ronald Storrs, Orientations (London 1945), p.94.
32. Seikaly, "Coptic Communal Reform...", op.cit., p.269.
33. Ibid., 269; Samir Seikaly, "The Copts under British Rule, 1882-1914" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1967), p.94.
34. Muhammad Sayyid Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭī Qadīman wa Hadīthan (Cairo 1962), p.43.

be preferred. It was difficult for many Muslims to accept that this weak community had once been great, and some liked to comment that the Copts were not the sons of the Pharaohs, but rather the descendants of captive slaves of the Pharaohs.[35] Perhaps the Copts also had trouble accepting this past: some of their self-congratulatory writing may have been as much designed to convince themselves as Muslims and foreigners of their true worth.

The discovery of the ancient past sparked a parallel Coptic interest in the Christian period. A Coptic Museum was founded and societies were formed to encourage the study of Coptic history and the Coptic language.[36] The latter had been used only for liturgical purposes for centuries; few priests, let alone laymen, could claim fluency. In 1916, al-Watan suggested that the Copts reject Arabic as a foreign tongue and return to their native one.[37] A later Coptic proposal was that all Egyptians study Coptic because of its connection to hieroglyphics. Echoing Maspero, some Copts deduced from the notion that all Egyptians had a Pharaonic core, the theory that all Egyptians had a Coptic one as well. As Murqus Simaika commented, all Egyptians were Copts; some Copts just happened to be Muslim and others happened to be Christian.[38] Here he reduced the importance of religious belief to the merest historical accident, but it was not a reduction that was likely to win Muslim acceptance. Attempts to revive Coptic were unsuccessful: communal history, however, proved more accessible. In the early 1950s, the Society of the Coptic Nation, al-'Umma al-Qibtiyya,

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35. Misr, 13 March 1939, p.1.
36. The Committee of Coptic History was one such society. It was formed in 1919 to promote the teaching of Coptic history in Coptic schools.
37. Al-Watan, 13 January 1916, quoted in Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭī, p.51.
38. Al-'Ahrām, 3 February 1926, p.1.

sparked a new interest, particularly among the young, in the community's past. This came at a time when the Copts felt their identity as Egyptians threatened.

The point Pharaonism's formulators were trying to make was that Egyptians had a remarkable history and were a distinct nationality. They were most successful as well as most numerous and active in the 1920s and early 1930s; after that Pharaonism's popularity faded. The Copts did retain a strong interest in the movement, although it was primarily the preoccupation of the well-educated. It can have had little meaning or attraction for the masses.

Two of its more intelligent proponents were Haikal and Taha Husain, although the latter was more interested in the notion of a regional Mediterranean culture. Husain argued that most Egyptians were descended in a direct line from the Pharaonic Egyptians and were untainted by Arab blood. He insisted that Arab civilization, when compared with the older one, had had a meagre impact on Egypt. Accordingly, he maintained both that Egypt had little in common with her Arab neighbours,[39] and that neither language nor religion could provide an adequate foundation for unity.[40]

Haikal shared these sentiments and publicized them in al-Siyāsa, the Liberal paper under his editorship. He too saw a strong link to the Pharaonic past;[41] throughout the 1920s he wrote articles extolling this ancient civilization and calling for a revival of its literature and art.[42]

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39. Interview in al-Makhshūf, quoted in al-Majalla al-Jadīda, December 1938, pp.75-6.
40. Ṭaha Husain, Mustaqbil al-Thaqāfa fī Miṣr (Cairo 1938), pp.21-3.
41. Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal, Thawrat al-'Adab (Cairo 1965), p.138.
42. Muḥammad Darwazah, al-Wahda al-ᶜArabiyya (Beirut 1957), p.344. Haikal even believed that early Islamic literature had been influenced by Pharaonic culture. Al-Siyāsa al-'Usbūᶜiyya, 20 October 1928, quoted in Samīra Baḥr, "al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Hayat al-Siyāsiyya fi Miṣr" (unpublished PhD thesis, Cairo University 1977), pp.291-2.

He hoped that Pharaonism would inspire the creation of a national literature;[43] but, by the 1930s, he was, at least publicly, showing more interest in Islam. In 1933 he admitted in Thawrat al-'Adab that Egyptian culture was the product of her entire history and that the Islamic period was also worthy of study.[44] His interest in the latter period later increased.

Another important writer, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, believed, like Ḥusain, that environment determined national character. In noting the obvious differences in the geography of the Arabian Peninsula and that of the Nile Valley, he proposed that the Egyptians reject Arab culture in favour of their indigenous one. He too described the chain between the Egyptian peasant and his Pharaonic forbears as unbroken and strong.[45] Foreign conquerors might have introduced, in his eyes, an element of moral corruption into Egypt; but they have not succeeded in compromising the ancient spirit of the people.[46]

To Salāma Mūsā, the Pharaonic era was not only relevant to Egypt, but was to be treated with awe, as something almost sacred.[47] He too believed that the Egyptians were superior to the Arabs because of their Pharaonic blood.[48] Mūsā tried to encourage the erection of Pharaonic statues and memorials, believing that such solid evidence

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43. Haikal, Thawrat al-'Adab, p.138.
44. Smith feels that at this point the Islamic past was still subordinate to the ancient one. Charles Smith, "Muhammad Husayn Haykal: An Intellectual and Political Biography", unpublished PhD thesis (University of Michigan 1968), pp.291-6.
45. Hilary Kilpatrick, The Modern Egyptian Novel (London 1974), pp.42-3.
46. Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, 'Awdat al-Rūḥ (Cairo 1973, first edition 1933), pp.53-64.
47. Ibrahim, Egyptian Intellectuals, p.177.
48. Salāma Mūsā, al-Yawm w-al-Ghad (Cairo 1927), p.235.

would reinforce the Egyptians' sense of continuity.[49] Mūsā's ambition, evident in so much of his writing, was to gain recognition for the existence of a specific Egyptian culture.

The Coptic press maintained a steady enthusiasm for the Pharaonic period; and portrayed ancient Egypt, in sometimes vivid stretches of the imagination, as the source of science, civilization and even constitutional government.[50] Misr repeatedly chided those who concentrated on Egypt's Islamic period and ignored the older heritage.[51] The paper encouraged the study of Pharaonic history and may have devoted more space to the discovery of antiquities than any other newspaper.[52] It was disturbed that the Egyptian government declined to support excavations and that the majority of Egyptologists were foreigners writing in foreign languages.[53]

To establish an inheritance in which Islam and Arab culture played no part is akin to both Lebanese Christians claiming direct descent from the Phoenicians and Syrian Christians, like Farah 'Antūn, insisting on the precedence of their pre-Islamic Syrian rather than Islamic inheritance. Motives, of course, may have differed. Lebanese Christians, like some Copts before World War I, emphasized the ancient heritage to make clear their separation from their Muslim compatriots and, in the Lebanese case, from Syria. 'Antūn and later Copts focused on

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49. Ibrahim, Egyptian Intellectuals, p.223. One of the less happy results of this enthusiasm for ancient Egypt was the spawning of a neo-Pharaonic school of architecture and sculpture: witness that memorial to Egyptian independence, the "Egypt Awakes" formed of a sphinx and a woman throwing off her veil.
50. Misr, 12 April 1919, p.1.
51. Misr, 18 September 1933, p.1.
52. 'Anīs Sāyigh believes that the Coptic press paid more attention to discoveries than what he calls "the Islamic Press". 'Anīs Sāyigh al-Fikra al-ʿArabiyya fi Misr (Beirut 1959), p.211.
53. Misr, 3 November 1947, p.1.

pre-Islamic culture as a common ground on which they felt both Muslims and Christians could stand. Neither wished to be reminded of an historical period in which they had existed on the extreme fringes of society. The Copts, therefore, made this collective possession of a national history the chief element in national feeling.[54] They had little choice; they could not turn to language or religion.

Arabic was often emphasized as critical in establishing the Arab identity; nevertheless, it was not entirely ruled out by those wishing to establish an Egyptian national identity. The Egyptians had a distinctive colloquial dialect, and some Copts and Muslims were interested in using it to Egyptianize literary Arabic. This was not only from a desire to write the living language but "a wish to realize our national character by using our tongue".[55] Among those who argued for the literary use of the colloquial were Lutfī al-Sayyīd, Mohammad Haikal, Qāsim 'Amīn, 'Aḥmad 'Amīn, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Fahmī, Yūsuf 'Idrīs, and Louis ᶜAwaḍ.[56] The latter, who took the trouble to formulate a theory of colloquial usage, now wished, because of the considerable fire that this drew, that he had used the colloquial in his writings quietly.[57] Salāma Mūsā, too, wished the Egyptians to write as they spoke. Such a development would have increased literacy, but Mūsā and his colleagues were after something else. Mūsā saw classical Arabic as fossilized; man could not progress unless his language kept pace.[58] Classical

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54. Donald Reid, The Odyssey of Farah Antun (Minneapolis 1975), p.101.
55. Al-Majalla al-Jadīda, May 1931, p.789.
56. See ᶜAwaḍ's discussion of his use of the colloquial in his poetry in the introduction to Plutoland. He argues that the precedence local European languages gained over Latin weakened the power of the religious hierarchy but not the essence of Christianity, and he implied that it would be no bad thing were this to happen in Egypt. See his Blūtūlānd (Cairo 1947), pp.11-13. ᶜAwaḍ now admits that he advocated the use of the colloquial to undermine religion and help establish a secular society. Interview, 29 February 1980.
57. Interview, Louis ᶜAwaḍ, 29 February 1980.
58. Salāma Mūsā, al-Balāgha al-'Asriyya w-al-Lugha al-ᶜArabiyya (Cairo 1945), pp.53, 71.

Arabic had suppressed Egyptian nationalism,[59] and he and others argued for an Egyptian literary language that would help isolate Egypt from the Arab world.[60]

The Pharaonic strain of thought was not without its critics, who were proud of their Islamic heritage and saw its influence as paramount in contemporary Egypt. They were, of course, Muslims who might not have resisted the notion that Pharaonic civilization had genuine merit but would not credit any theory which reduced 1,300 years of Arabo-Islamic history to triviality. In addition, the closer blood connection of the Copts to the Pharaonic Egyptians made the Copts, in an Egypt of primarily Pharaonic character, a kind of natural aristocracy, and this was a distasteful idea.[61]

The Syrian Rashid Rida's al-Manār criticized the Pharaonic movement and attacked its Coptic advocates as tools of British policy.[62] The journal al-Risāla expressed similar views and insisted that Egypt's only past of note was her Islamic one; all traces of the spirit and culture of Pharaonic Egypt had disappeared.[63] Both the Muslim Brethren and the Syrian-Christian owned al-Hilāl rejected the Pharaonic movement, albeit for different reasons. Hassan al-Bannā wrote that the Brethren welcomed "ancient Egypt as a history in which there is glory, pride, science and knowledge", but emphatically rejected any sugtestion that Egypt return to the ways prevalent before "God granted her the teaching

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59. Ibrahim, The Egyptian Intellectuals, p.220.
60. Dawazah, al-Wahda al-ᶜArabiyya, p.349.
61. Wendell, The Evolution, p.163.
62. Al-Manār 31 (20 December 1930/1349 AH), p.45.
63. Al-Risāla, 11 October 1933, pp.3-4. According to Sylvia Haim, the journal's editor, 'Ahmad Hassan al-Zayāt, saw Arab unity as a prelude to Islamic unity. See her Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley 1962), p.53.

of Islam".[64] Several proponents were lost by the Pharaonic cause in the 1930s, including al-ʿAqqād' Haikal and ʾAhmad Husain; Taha Husain, with his long religious training, had never ignored entirely the importance of Islamic culture. Except among the Copts, the movement seemed to be dead by 1940; and those like ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAzzam and Satī al-Husrī, who continued to criticize it through the 1950s and 1960s were only shadow boxing. Of course, their real target was not Pharaonism specifically but rather the concept that the Egyptians constituted a distinct nationl with a unique history, spirit and character. Not all of those who believed in Egypt's uniqueness, however, were devoted to the Pharaonic period.

Wafdists and Liberal Constitutionalists were among those who were sympathetic to the Pharaonic movement,[65] but neither were so committed to secularism or Pharaonism that they avoided using religious feeling for political gain. The Liberals, for example, created an issue out of Zaghlūl's final resting place in 1930. Zaghlūl's family and the Wafd Government wanted to bury him in a Pharaonic-style tomb. Al-Siyāsa seized the opportunity this presented and ran a series of articles criticizing the design as heretical.[66] In words more suitable to the Muslim Brethren press, the paper proclaimed the Pharaohs infidels and, in another statement bordering on the criminal, called on pious Muslims to wipe out all traces of this civilization.[67]

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64. Mitchell, The Society of Muslim Brothers, p.266. Some opponents labelled the Pharaonic movement as yet another attempt by the British to divide and rule. See Sāyigh, al-Fikra al-ʿArabiyya, p.101; ʾAhmad Ṭarabain, al-Waḥda al-ʿArabiyya Bain 1916 wa 1946, (Cairo 1957), p.189.
65. 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīḥa, a retired Wafdist politician, insists that the Egyptians have Pharaonic blood running through their veins and that they absorbed their Arab conquerors. Interview, 13 June 1979.
66. Al-Siyāsa, 23 January, 6 February, 20 April 1930, quoted in Smith, Muḥammad Ḥusein Haikal, p.238. Al-Siyāsa, 13 February 1930, quoted in the Egyptian Gazette, 14 February 1930, p.4. Unfortunately, this volume of al-Siyāsa is missing from Dār al-Kutub so these sources could not be confirmed.
67. Misr, 10 January 1930, p.4.

Misr attacked this as an attempt to replace patriotic with religious feelings,[68] and added drily that expressions of religious fervour from al-Siyāsa could only be regarded as suspect in light of the ᶜAli ᶜAbd al-Rāziq affair.[69] Al-Balāgh also attacked the Liberals for false piety. Moreover, it defended Pharaonic art as worthy of imitation because it was Egyptian art and made a point of trying to illustrate Wafdist sensitivity to Islam.[70]

The Liberals, of course, hoped to weaken the Wafd by proving a shallow commitment to religion. Al-Siyāsa recommended that a religious opinion (fatwa) on the acceptability of a Pharaonic tomb be solicited.[71] For good measure, this campaign was coupled with anti-Coptic remarks. ᶜUbaid was blamed for the tomb design and was accused of having overridden the natural inclination of Mme. Zaghlūl and Nahhās for an Islamic-style tomb.[72] The Copts were again accused of having excessive influence in both Wafdist Councils and the diplomatic corps.[73]

An unattractive pseudo-Pharaonic mausoleum was finally built. The Liberals were clever to see the symbolic importance of the tomb, but their efforts to rouse public ire over the idolatrous resting place of their beloved leader failed. The Sidqī government solved any lingering difficulties by making the tomb a national pantheon, Zaghlūl co-habiting

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68. Misr, 13 February 1930, p.3.
69. Misr, 15 February 1930, p.4.
70. The paper noted that all mosques built by the Wafd government were in the Arab style, but that in any case, this style had nothing to do with Islam. Al-Balāgh, 6 February 1930.p.2.
71. The article continued "...the present Cabinet must understand that it is the first....to look with contempt on the religious feelings of Muslims". Al-Siyāsa, 13 February 1930, quoted in the Egyptian Gazette, 14 February 1930. p.4.
72. Al-Siyāsa, 22 April 1930, p.5.
73. Misr, 13 February 1930, p.1.

with a few distinguished Pharaonic mummies. Predictably, the Wafd was unhappy with this desecration,[74] but perhaps conservative Muslims found it even more distasteful.

2. Mediterraneanism

Those who formulated and publicized the notion that Egypt was a part of a general Mediterranean civilization were not necessarily opposed to Pharaonism; two of the most active publicists, Taha Ḥusain and Salāma Mūsā, were, in fact, enthusiastic Pharaonists. Pharaonism was, of course, designed to give Egypt a cultural "edge" by pointing to a glorious and unequalled heritage. Mediterraneanism, on the other hand, was meant to fix that "edge" by establishing an identity with at least a part of Europe. This theory tying Egypt to European civilization through the Mediterranean created less public interest than Pharaonism and was even more distinctly the plaything of the intelligentsia. As Edward Said has noted, any suggestion that Egypt was European marked only the cultural identity of the suggester and not that of the vast majority of Egyptians.[75] At heart here, as another scholar has suggested, was not only a desire to prove that Egypt was unique but that her culture and mind were rational and intrinsically modern.[76] The proponents of the existence of a distinct Mediterranean culture tried to establish that the Egyptians were the cultural and intellectual equals of Europeans and perhaps were therefore prepared for a Western-modelled government. While it was not

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74. See ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād's article in Miṣr, 1 December 1931, p.1. In 1937 the mummies were moved out of the tomb, and Zaghlūl was left in peaceful solitude.
75. Edward Said, Orientalism (New York 1978), p.323.
76. Ernest Dawn, From Ottomanism to Arabism (Urbana 1973), p.188.

necessarily wrong to suggest that Egypt shared elements of her culture with Greece, Spain and Italy, the tendency to overlook cultural and historical differences was as mistaken as failing to note any similarities would have been.

Taha Husain, who remarked on Egyptian admiration for European civilization, progress and education, wrote that the Egyptians thought and felt as Europeans and strove to emulate a European political system.[77] As noted previously, many wealthy Copts had adopted European culture in place of their own, which had made them marginal. Wāsif Ghālī, who was most comfortable expressing himself in French, was one such Copt.[78] Unfortunately, this new allegiance estranged them from the majority of their compatriots and brought suspicion on the whole Coptic community.

Salāma Mūsā, seeing Pharaonic Egypt as the source of the ancient world's civilization,[79] believed that Egypt's links, through the Greeks and Romans, to the West were stronger than those, through the Arabs, to the East.[80] Egypt's ties to the East were religious and therefore, by definition, anachronistic. Mūsā wanted Egypt to emulate the "advanced" West; the East constituted a drag on Egypt and could keep her from the progress of which she was capable.[81] To prove Egypt's ability to emulate the West, he confused what appeared to be previously a clear division of East and West by positing a middle ground, Mediterranean civilization. Christianity, Judaism and Islam had all originated in

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77. Taha Husain, Mir'at al-'Islām, quoted in Ibrahim, Egyptian Intellectuals, p.44.
78. He was often criticized for this by the opposition press. See al-Siyāsa al-'Usbū'iyya, 11 June 1927, pp.3-4.
79. Salāma Mūsā, al-Yaum w-al-Ghad, p.236.
80. Ibid., p.248.
81. Ibid., p.241.

the Middle East, therefore Egyptians and Europeans shared elements of culture.[82] Mūsā, at one point, rather extravagantly suggested that there was no difference between the Arab and the ancient Egyptian cultures.[83]

Taha Husain also liked to suggest that Egypt and Europe were culturally one, and he tried to demonstrate the influence of ancient Egypt on Greece and later of Greek thought on Egypt.[84] He, too, pointed to Christianity's Eastern origin; and he argued that Islam, born in the same region, could not make Egypt Eastern if Christianity had not had the same effect on Europe. He added that Islam had not only benefited from Greek thought but had at one time made this thought available to Europe.[85] Taha's East is the Far East,[86] and few would disagree with him by arguing that Egypt had more in common with China than with Europe. Like Mūsā, he tried to establish a foundation for emulating Western ways: he insisted that the Egyptians had long realized that a religion and a political system were two separate things and that a constitution and state must rest on a practical foundation.[87]

Mirrit Ghālī promoted a vision of an Egypt which included Western and Eastern influences. He described Egypt as the meeting ground of

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82. Salāma Mūsā wrote several articles in al-Hilāl on this theme. See al-Hilāl, July 1927, pp.1072-4 and 1 December 1928, pp.177-81, for examples.
83. Mūsā, al-Yawm, p.236.
84. Husain, Mustaqbil, pp.12-14.
85. Ibid., pp.21-3.
86. Taha Hussain, The Future of Culture in Egypt, translation by Sidney Glazer (Washington DC 1954), pp.4-5.
87. Ibid., p.6.

two civilizations.[88] Few saw as clearly as he that Egyptian culture was the product of her entire history and that no era could be excluded without robbing that culture of some of its wealth.[89]

3. Arabism

Those who defined Egypt as an Arab country had a blind spot as well, but their interpretation at least had some chronological merit. They concentrated on the years following the Arab conquest and ignored those that preceded it. Egypt's obvious cultural and religious affinities to her Arab neighbours were in their favour but to assume that Arab civilization had obliterated all traces of Egypt's pre-Islamic culture was as perverse as crediting that civilization with no influence.

There were two sorts of theorists here: those who saw Egypt as Arab because she was Muslim and for whom, therefore, religion and national identity were inextricably entwined and those who wished to build a foundation for including Egypt in a secular pan-Arab union. The first were not necessarily opposed to the goal of the second but rather tended to see Arab unity as a step toward the ultimate aim of Islamic unity. The latter were secularists and some, like Satīʿ al-Husri, went to great lengths to keep religion out of their theory.[90] Religion was incidental, a fact which was witnessed by the important contributions Syrian Christians made to pan-Arab thinking.

Shared history and language together produced the Arab nation. Al-Husrī distinguished between Arab and Islamic history and promoted

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88. Mirrit Ghali, The Policy of Tomorrow, trans. Ismail al-Faruq (Washington DC 1953) (first Arabic edition 1933), pp.108-9.
89. At times, Salāma Mūsā also suggested that Egypt look to both her Arab and Pharaonic eras for inspiration. See al-Majalla al-Jadīda, May 1932, p.791; al-Yawm w-al-Ghad, pp.235-6.
90. Satīʿ al-Husrī, "Muslim Unity and Arab Unity", in Haim, Arab Nationalism, pp.147-53.

the existence of a highly civilized pre-Islamic Arab nation in the peninsula. Language was a more important ingredient than history; and he argued, in a similar vein, that Arabic had flowered before the divine revelation of the Qur'ān.[91] By the importance he gave linguistic unity in his writings, he made Islamic unity impossible; the Muslim countries spoke many different languages. Language was problematic enough for Arab unity. The various colloquial dialects of Arabic presented difficulties in communication, and al-Ḥuṣrī condemned them as divisive.

The work of al-Ḥuṣrī and other secular pan-Arabists not withstanding, the common man did not find it easy to disentangle pan-Arabism from Islam. The Arabs, after all, only had a common history because of Islam; and the connection between the language and the religion could only be ignored by the most obtuse. It was precisely because of this latter connection that the Copts were barred from study at the Dār al-ʿUlūm, which in part trained language instructors, and from teaching Arabic in schools.[92] In 1951 the Ministry of Education, noting the connection between language teaching and the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, voiced its disturbance and ordered an investigation into rumours that private schools were employing non-Muslim teachers of Arabic.[93] To insist, as the Copts did, that Arabic was their native tongue and that there were Christians who had spoken it before the advent of Islam, served them nought; this explains the desire of some Copts to Egyptianize literary Arabic.

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91. William Cleveland, The Making of an Arab Nationalist (Princeton 1971), pp.121-3.
92. This ban was only made official by Ministerial decree in 1940. Miṣr, 12 April 1946, p.1.
93. Miṣr, 12 February 1951, p.1.

For years, the most enthusiastic proponents of Egypt's Arab character were non-Egyptians like Satī . They saw Egypt's wealth and large population as critical to establishing a successful Arab nation.[94] Their initial efforts were frustrated by an official and popular lack of interest in pan-Arabism. Many politicians and intellectuals were promoting the idea of a particular Egyptian identity. As has been demonstrated, they had some success; the people had a sense of being Egyptian rather than Arab. "Arab" had, in fact, long been a pejorative word in Egypt. The only ground for the pan-Arabists to build on was the one provided by some Egyptian nationalists, like Taha Husain who, although opposed to unity, were not averse to co-operation with their Arab neighbours.[95] This, at least, was a start, but it was a slow one. Only when the states in the region gained or were approaching independence and became active in inter-Arab affairs did Egypt come to see an Arab role as in her interest.[96] Palestine was an important catalyst, and the situation there made increasing claims on Egyptian attention from the late 1930s.

Like many other Egyptians, Wafdists were until this time preoccupied with Egyptian concerns and did not take any real notice of the pan-Arabists. In a remark characteristic of Wafd policy, Zaghlūl in 1921 answered a proposal that the Egyptians and Arabs join forces to secure their mutual independence negatively, noting that zero plus zero

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94. Satīʿ al-Husrī, al-ʿUrūba 'Awwalan (Beirut 1965).
95. Anwar Chejne, "Egyptian Attitudes to Pan-Arabism", Middle East Journal XI (1957), p.258.
96. Leonard Binder, "Ideological foundations of Egyptian-Arab nationalism", in Ideology and Discontent, ed. David Apter (New York 1964), p.136.

was still zero.[97] In a speech to the Senate in 1937, al-Nahhās made the first official party statement supporting the Arabs in Palestine.[98] From this time, statements backing Palestinian Arab demands and condemning British policy became frequent. Palestine did not then appear to be a high-risk issue, and parties other than the Wafd were also vocal on the subject.[99] By 1944 Wafdist concern with pan-Arab issues prompted Leon Castro, a Jewish lawyer and old Wafdist, to accuse al-Nahhās of abandoning the policy of Zaghlūl who had feared that Arab unity would lead to religious fanaticism. It seemed a clear sign of the times that al-Balāgh hotly defended Zaghlūl from this imagined attack by insisting that the man had never said that Egypt was not an Arab country. The newspaper construed Castro's comment as an attack on both Islam and Egypt.[100]

Only a short time after this, al-Nahhās signed the Arab League protocol. King Fārūq, having finally abandoned his caliphal ambitions in favour of pan-Arab ones, helped set a pan-Arab course for Egypt, without necessarily bothering to inform or obtain the consent of his government.[101] A political role in Arab affairs was, however, one thing and unity another. When the Syrian Prime Minister proposed immediate unification in 1951, the reaction of some Egyptians was still chilly. The influential journalist Mustafā 'Amīn likened the Prime

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97. The Wafd in 1921 was hoping for the support of the French against the British so they could not back the Syrians against the French.
98. Sāyigh, al-Fikra al-ʿArabiyya, p.241.
99. Ibid., p.194. FO.371/23364, J1973/774/11.
100. Egyptian Gazette, 14 September 1944, p.3.
101. Elie Kedourie, The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies (London 1970), pp.215-6.

Minister's idea to the situation of a farmer who, having failed to cultivate one half a feddan (Palestine), was proposing to take on the cultivation of 1,000 feddans.[102]

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Liberals sometimes advocated co-operation with Arab countries, but they always stopped short of political unity.[103] Al-Siyāsa, its judgment obscured by enthusiasm for the struggle against the British, even suggested in 1931 that Muslims and Jews in Palestine unite to gain their independence.[104] Pushed by the same considerations as the Wafd, the Liberals began to show greater interest in pan-Arabism at roughly the same time as their political opponents. Increasingly, for all parties, the supposed lack of proper brotherly feelings for Arab neighbours became yet one more stick with which to beat an incumbent government.[105]

The Copts, without a great leap of the imagination, could not see themselves as Arabs and in this they differed from Syrian Christians. One of the better-known Egyptian pan-Arabists, ᶜAbd al-Rahman ᶜAzzām, made just such a leap in an effort to persuade the Copts. He promoted the rather odd idea that Egypt had been an Arab country before the birth of Jesus. This, of course, made the Copts Arab; not only did it make them Arab, argued ᶜAzzām with a final flourish, but it made some of them more Arab than the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina.[106] The Copts, however, were not convinced; they saw Arabism as a doctrine which even in its secular guise could be used to exclude them

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102. 'Akhbār al-Yawm, 24 January 1951, quoted in Chejne, Egyptian Attitudes to Pan-Arabism, pp.261-2.
103. Al-Siyāsa, 14 June 1933, p.1.
104. Egyptian Gazette, 19 November 1931, p.4.
105. For example, in 1932 al-Siyāsa accused the Minister of Foreign Affairs of trying to isolate Egypt from her Arab neighbours. In another article the paper criticised the Ministry of Education because it had invited foreign scholars to speak on subjects other than "Eastern, Islamic and Arab" topics. Al-Siyāsa, 5 August 1932, p.4; al-'Ittihād, 3 April 1933, 0.1.
106. Al-Hilāl, September-October 1943, pp.462-3, quoted in Haim, Arab Nationalism, p.51.

from national life.[107] Being a minority in Egypt was uncomfortable enough; the prospect of being an even smaller minority in a greater Arab state did not bear contemplation.

Salāma Mūsā, echoing Lutfī al-Sayyid, pointed to the differences between the various Middle Eastern peoples and sceptically asked what the Westernized Lebanese had in common with the more backward Sa^{c}ūdis and Sudanese.[108] As the 1940s progressed, the Copts became increasingly worried about pan-Arab sentiment. They saw themselves as potential if not actual victims of this dangerous idea. Some tried to discredit it by calling it a plot to distract Egypt from her real interests:[109] the British were responsible for both the mess in Palestine[110] and the creation of the Arab League, an organization which the Copts found at best suspect. Salāma Mūsā was one who tried to use British support for the League against it.[111] He called it an Islamic League and insisted that it would finally accomplish, by increasing religious fanaticism, what the British had been trying to do for years: the division of Muslims and Copts.[112] Louis ^{c}Awaḍ also objected to the League;[113] and others, writing in Miṣr also described the League as a religious organization. Their emphasis was always on the fact that the people of the Nile Valley were Egyptian and not Arab.[114]

One rather unlikely supporter of pan-Arabism was the Copt Makram ^{c}Ubaid. Never much interested in the traditions of his community, he

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107. They did not oppose a degree of co-operation, al-Waṭan, 18 August 1926, p.1.
108. Miṣr, 6 August 1937, p.1.
109. The Cry of Egypt's Copts (New York 1951), p.3.
110. Miṣr, 25 May 1948, p.1.
111. Miṣr, 17 April 1946, p.1.
112. Miṣr, 6 July 1946, p.1.
113. Interview, Louis ^{c}Awaḍ, 29 February 1980.
114. Miṣr, 30 November 1946, p.1; 4 December 1946, p.1.

may well have been the only Copt to deride Pharaonism publicly,[115] and to claim that the Egyptians were Arabs.[116]

He went even further and applauded Arab unity because it had the capacity to make Muslims and Copts indistinguishable.[117] This, of course, was exactly what his co-religionists feared. They were well aware of whose distinguishing characteristics would be obliterated. Of course, public pronouncements, particularly those of politicians, do not signify personal commitment; and Makram's support for pan-Arabism, especially in the latter part of the constitutional monarchy, may have been a tactic to overcome the handicap of his Christian background.[118] He was never an important theorist of pan-Arabism, and his early statements on the subject have probably had too much attention paid to them. In fact, in one place what he called unity was really only a kind of solidarity to help fight imperialism and develop economic resources; he did not suggest that the Arabs give up their separate nationalisms.[119] His definition of unity was no doubt deliberately fuzzy, but it seems clear that he did not want questioned his support for the concept of unity. One of the planks in his party's platform called for the encouragement of pan-Arab co-operation as a step toward unity.[120] His support for the pan-Arab cause increased as the fortunes of his party declined and as other parties made greater use of religious propaganda. Pan-Arabism and anti-British zeal were Makram's secular replacements.

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115. He said this on a visit to Syria, and he promised to use his influence to bring about closer ties with Egypt. Egyptian Gazette, 19 September 1931, pp.4, 8.
116. Makram ʿUbaid, "al-Miṣriyyūn ʿArab", al-Hilāl (April 1939), p.33.
117. Ṣāyigh, al-Fikra al-ʿArabiyya, p.173.
118. He may even have opposed Arabism at one point. ʿAzzam suggests that it was Makram's enthusiastic reception in Syria in 1931 that made him into a friend if not an actual partisan of Arab unity. FO.141/744 834/1/33
119. ʿUbaid, "al-Miṣriyyūn ʿArab", pp.32-3.
120. Bahr, al-'Aqbāṭ, p.745. In October 1944, Makram claimed that all true Egyptians, Muslim and Copt, believed in the pan-Arab plan, and he condemned al-Naḥḥās for his past opposition to unity. Egyptian Gazette, 11 October 1944, p.3.

Those organizations which did the most to promote the Palestinian cause, until the late 1940s, like the Muslim Brethren, Misr al-Fatāt, Shabāb Muhammad and the Young Men's Muslim Association, were moved more by religious than pan-Arab sentiment.[121] At a Brethren meeting in 1936, the Supreme Guide invited both Copts and Muslims to defend Palestine. When the audience voiced its objections to Coptic participation, he pointed out that fairness demanded this since Muslims had helped defend Abyssinia against the Italians: "If the Copts respond to the call, good; if they do not, we will see that they suffer for it".[122]

No doubt many Copts hoped to avoid a Palestinian entanglement.[123] Events in Palestine had so aggravated Egyptian Muslim sentiment that attacks on Egyptian Jews and foreign Christians were becoming common, and these did not inspire confidence. The Copts feared, with some cause, that Muslims would suspect them of having more in common with Palestinian Jews than Muslim compatriots. For example, the 1938 election campaign saw a group of 'Azharī demonstrators rather wildly demand that the Copts be expelled and sent to Palestine.[124] As a conservative Christian community, the Copts had little sympathy for the Jews in any case.

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121. J.W.D. Gray, "Arab Nationalism: ᶜAbdin against the Wafd", The Middle East Forum 38 (1962), p.18. Ṣāyigh concedes that there is some truth in this in al-Fikra al-ᶜArabiyya, pp.240-1. As Misr noted, all Brethren and Shabāb propaganda on Palestine had a religious colour. It charged that they had made religion into a "call to blood, killing, hostility and hatred". Misr, 17 May 1947, p.1. See also Misr, 6 September 1951, p.2, for a similar complaint about Misr al-Fatāt, Kedourie believes that it was the Brethren's championship that alerted the Egyptian masses to the problem, and this no doubt helps explain Coptic wariness. Elie Kedourie, "Religion and secular nationalism in the Arab world", in The Middle East: Oil, Conflict and Hope, ed. A.L. Udovitch (Lexington 1976), p.185.
122. FO.141/536, 403/12/36.
123. Al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 2 April 1951, quoted in The Cry of Egypt's Copts, pp.18-19.
124. Kedourie, The Chatham House Version, p.200.

When Murqus Sergius, then the Patriarch's Deputy, was invited to a major anti-partition rally in 1947, he declined to attend. He told a visiting delegation that he would not take a hand in fighting the Jews, a fellow minority, at a time when the Copts were facing increasing discrimination at home. He added that those Copts who had supported his appearances at al-'Azhar in 1919 would not countenance them now.[125] Cooler or more cowardly heads prevailed because the Patriarch attended the meeting in Sergius' place.[126] Coptic religious dignitaries appear to have attended other partition ralles as well.[127]

Few Copts in 1947 were as vocal as Sergius, and only a fool would have opposed Egyptian policy once the war began. The church, of course, never differed publicly with the government in foreign policy matters; and it had, in any case, a real concern about the fate of its wealthy Jerusalem endowments. The church preferred that the endowments not be under the jurisdiction of a country with whom Egypt was at war.[128]

It is not altogether surprising that the war sparked some enthusiasm among Copts. Christian Palestinians were, after all, fighting alongside Muslim Palestinians. Misr praised the Egyptian war effort and condemned Zionist plans. Article after article hammered away at the need for Copt-Muslim unity and reminded readers that, although al-Bannā' called the war a "jihād", Copts too were fighting.[129] Even Salāma Mūsā, in a burst of patriotic fervour, called on all

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125. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2. Revue des Periodiques Arabes, 31 December 1947. This is from al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 13 December 1947.
126. Ibid., Situation de la Communaute Copte en Egypte, 24 January 1948.
127. FO.371/62993, J6319/13/16.
128. The Greek Orthodox Patriarch declared that, in the absence of an international mandatory or Arab state as guardian of the Holy Places, he preferred that custody remain in Muslim hands. FO.371/63021, J5123/79/16.
129. Misr, 21 May 1948, p.1.

Egyptians to do their duty.[130] Despite these efforts, the Copts remained suspect and by 1951 were being insultingly compared to the Jews. Some Copts wondered whether Israel would welcome them if they were banished from Egypt, and Sergius glumly remarked that they might eventually be forced to seek such a refuge.[131] He complained that the Copts had become foreigners in their own country at a time when every foreign Muslim was considered a citizen.[132] This, to the Copts, was the manifest danger of Arabism.

4. Marxism

The Marxist movement in Egypt, formed by several disparate and schismatic groups rather than one disciplined party with strong Comintern links, provided an alternate focus of loyalty and placed the political community in an international context. It was a context which dissolved religious, ethnic and national distinctions.

Until the Second World War, the communist movement in Egypt was small, uninfluential and dominated, perhaps even monopolized, by foreigners. Jews, Armenians, Syrians, Lebanese, Russians and other Europeans were involved, but few Egyptian Muslims and Copts.[133] The various nationalities tended to stick together and their audience was very limited, given the miniscule size of the proletariat.[134] In 1925, the Residency noted that there were two main Marxist groups: one run by a Syrian with members from several ethnic and national groups amd a second composed of Russians and Europeans.[135] These men were

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130. Misr, 27 May 1948, p.1.
131. Al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 19 February 1951, reprinted in The Cry of Egypt's Copts, pp.20-1.
132. Al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 5 March 1951, p.1.
133. In those days it was much safer to be a communist if you held a foreign passport. Mohammed Heikal, Sphinx and Commissar: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Arab World (London 1978), p.39.
134. Ibid., p.39.
135. FO.371/10909, J1932/1153/16/

outsiders. If they were not themselves European, they were European educated and influenced. They had few ties to Egypt and no roots in the country. They could not and generally did not wish to be Egyptian. Accordingly, a movement which held out the promise of membership in a larger society was bound to have a certain attraction for them.

One Copt who did show an early interest in socialism as Salāma Mūsā, but he usually was considerably in advance of even the intellectual vanguard of his own community. In 1920, in the wake of the Russian revolution, he was associated in the founding of an Egyptian socialist party, the first organization of its kind in the country.[136] Mūsā, however, was much taken up with Fabian ideas; Marxist-Leninist doctrine seems not to have appealed to him. The party soon collapsed, and while Mūsā continued to promote theories of economic and social reform, evolution (a subject which he regarded with almost religious fervour) and progress, he remained apart from later and more orthodox manifestations of Marxism in Egypt. He was perhaps too much of an Egyptian nationalist to be attracted by an international perspective.

Other than Mūsā, the Copts were not greatly interested in the early movement but were content to explore their community's destiny within the framework of the political order they had helped to establish. This behaviour, perhaps atypical of a minority, shows the extent to which they felt themselves to be citizens of Egypt. As an indigenous minority, they did not have to look beyond the borders of their own country. Religious ties were strong, and many

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136. Salāma Mūsā, The Education of Salama Musa, p.137.

Copts were reluctant to involve themselves in a movement known to be godless. There was little incentive, at this time at any rate, for them to work for the overthrow of the new and largely untried political system; a system which not only promised equality but gave them an opportunity to wield such power as their talents fitted them to exercise. The chief political desideratum of Copts and Muslims in that period was the acquisition of genuine independence. While Salāma Mūsā's Socialist Party had shared this desire, its successors were preoccupied primarily with class conflict.[137] This was not a concern of many Egyptians at that time, and it can only be counted as a tactical error if the Marxists were interested in increasing their support among the Egyptian population. Some of them may not have been very interested in this; even as late as the early 1940s, the organization Iskra resisted suggestions that it Egyptianize its membership from a fear that this would erode its political sophistication.[138]

From the Second World War, there was a marked increase in Marxist activity.[139] Study circles developed into more formal groups, which split and formed themselves into new groups; journals were published, many of them short-lived; and the movement began to grow in influence. It began to acquire support among Egyptians, Muslims and Copts, and was particularly influential among students, labour and the left wing of the Wafd. In the early 1940s, membership still was dominated by foreigners and Jews. Even as late as 1948, the British

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137. Walter Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East (New York 1956), p.37. See also M.S. Agwami, Communism in the Arab East (London 1969), p.5.
138. Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism..., p.42.
139. Russia's entry into the war meant that British vigilance against the communists relaxed. Heikal, Sphinx..., p.47.

Embassy noted that Jews were still among the leading communists in Egypt.[140] Ibrahim Ibrahim has suggested that Coptic support for the movement also was strong,[141] but this is difficult to substantiate. There does not seem to have been a disproportionate degree of Coptic participation in the Marxist movement at any time, not even when the movement was stronger and had, to an extent, Egyptianized. By 1952 Walter Laqueur noted that the leadership of the communist movement was almost entirely Muslim.[142]

Still, there were Copts connected with various Marxist groups, and some occupied positions of importance in them. Perhaps Coptic participation can be linked with the increasing hostility shown to the Copts by the Muslim population of this period. These groups, no doubt, showed a firmer commitment to secularism than did the legitimate political parties. They were uninterested in religious affiliation. Of course, many politicians claimed a similar lack of interest, but few showed it. The Marxist periodical al-Tatawwur, begun in 1940, published a number of articles in its short life insisting on a separation between religion and state.[143] It promoted secularism, defended freedom of religion and criticized those who confused politics with religion.[144] These are not positions from which many in the Coptic community would have dissented. Still, it may be more fruitful to explore general reasons for Muslim and Copt participation in the movement. The legitimate political system had bankrupted itself; parties were interested only in power and not in the welfare of the Egyptian people. They had neither succeeded in getting rid of

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140. FO.371/69259, J3914/2410/16.
141. Ibrahim, Egyptian Intellectuals, p.285.
142. Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism..., p.51.
143. Rifʿat al-Saʿīd, al-Ṣiḥāfa al-Yasāriyya fī Miṣr, 1925-1948 (Cairo 1977), p.106.
144. Ibid., pp.105, 107.

the British nor in creating an honest and just government. The standard of living of ordinary Egyptians had declined, and many who joined the Marxist movement had a fierce concern for economic justice and equality. It should be said that these groups were not concerned only with class struggle, but that they also seemed to draw individuals possessing a variety of advanced or radical views; for example, some were very concerned with the liberation of women.

George Ḥinain, son of the early Wafdist Ṣādiq Ḥinain, may have been the most important Marxist Copt in this later period.[145] He came from a wealthier background than most Egyptian Marxists and, after flirting with several groups, seems to have ended up a Trotskyite. The orthodoxy of his attachment to this Marxist heresy is not known. In 1939 he belonged to the Society for Art and Freedom (Jamaᶜat al-Fann wa al-Ḥurriyya) which had, as its name suggests, primarily literary and artistic interests. The group started a magazine, the first three issues of which Ḥinain financed. He withdrew his support when his friend 'Anwār Kāmil, broke away to form Bread and Freedom (al-Khubz wa al-Ḥurriyya). Ḥinain became responsible for the financial side of Kamil's periodical Development (al-Tatawwur),[146] and he later was connected with the founding of the journal The New Dawn (al-Fajr al-Jadīd). He wrote occasional articles for these journals and, of course, provided money and financial advice.[147]

Two other Copts connected with al-Tatawwur were Tawfīq Ḥannā 'Allah and Ramses Yūnān.[148] Yūnān, an artist, seems to have been

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145. 'Ahmad Ṣādiq Saᶜd, Ṣafaḥāt min al-Yasār al-Miṣri 1945-6 (Cairo 1976), pp.39-45.
146. Saᶜīd, al-Ṣiḥāfa, p.83.
147. Ḥinain was a Francophile. He wrote in French by preference and had a keen interest in Impressionism. He was eventually ejected from the movement, perhaps for bourgeois tastes, and retired to Paris. Interview, 'Ibrahīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 19 March 1979
148. Saᶜīd, al-Ṣiḥāfa, pp.96, 102.

one of the more radical members of al-Khubz. He was, at any rate, an ardent feminist.[149] 'Anwār ᶜAbd al-Malik, the well-known critic and historian;[150] Lutfī 'Allah Sulīmān;[151] and ᶜAssad Halīm, a Coptic convert to Islam, also had connections with the Marxist movement.[152]

None of these groups was interested in Egypt's sectarian problems. Their myopia was perhaps engendered by the class model they used to examine society. Al-Tatawwur did, however, show some concern with religious fanaticism; and it criticized those political parties which resorted to religious tactics.[153]

The Marxist movement's vision of a secular and just society had much to recommend it. One factor which may have militated against Coptic support was that some groups, like the New Dawn, supported Arab unity.[154] In addition, the composition of the movement encouraged the public, egged on at times by the government, to make a connection between minorities and communism. Sidqī in 1946 claimed that the communists were in collusion with the Zionists, and in 1948 Parliament voted to declare war against Israel "in defence of Arab rights and against communist atheism".[155] The Copts were already being likened to the Jews; to court Marxism must have been seen by those in the community as courting disaster. A further consideration was that some Marxist groups were collaborating with and had even won some members from the Muslim Brethren and 'Ahmad Husain's Socialist Party. These new Marxists were likely to have retained their old attitude toward the Copts.

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149. Ibid., p.85.
150. FO.141/1158, 66/109/47.
151. Sulīmān presented himself as a Copt but may have been of Syrian extraction. His masquerade may have been the result of attempts to Egyptianize the movement. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 19 March 1979.
152. From the early 1940s, he was connected with various Marxist groups and in 1950 was a member of the Central Committee of the Egyptian Communist Party. FO.371/80354, E1011/6/16.
153. Saᶜīd, al-Sihāfa, p.107.
154. Ibid., pp.136-7.
155. Heikal, Sphinx, p.52.

C. An Historiography of Copt-Muslim Relations

Many Egyptian writers, summing up the long centuries of Copt-Muslim co-habitation, interpreted history in the light of their reaction to communal relations in their own time and their goals for the future. Muslims naturally stressed Muslim tolerance; many nationalists, eager to establish an independent and democratic state, suggested an historical background of communal solidarity and brotherhood. For example, Mustafā Kāmil declared in an 1895 speech that Copts and Muslims had co-existed peacefully for 13 centuries, and that their religious differences had never had any political import.[156]

Despite this, Egyptian writers in the period before World War One, when communal relations were tense, often seemed to suppress examples of peaceful inter-ethnic co-operation and concentrate on episodes of conflict in Egyptian history. The Copts tended to portray the Arabs as usurpers; in a happier period, they would praise the latter for lifting the Byzantine yoke. Some Copts, echoing Maspero, tried to establish a clear separation from Muslims by arguing that their descent from the Pharaonic Egyptians made them racially different.[157] Much later, this claim was repeated by Muslims who were prejudiced against the Coptic community. In 1937, Shaikh al-Marāghī, to drive home his denunciation of Coptic influence, stated that the Copts were a racial as well as a religious minority.[158]

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156. Saikaly, The Copts under British Rule, p.138.
157. Some Copts before the war did countenance a common descent, but Muslims were not at that time interested in claiming Pharaonic ancestors. See the speeches of Mikhā'īl Fānūs, 'Akhnūkh Fānūs and Murqus Hannā at Coptic Conference Held at Assiout, 6-8 March 1911, no place, n.d., pp.6-18, 33-9.
158. FO.407/221, No.27, D.V. Kelly to Mr. Eden, 2 September 1937.

The 1919 revolution, which deserves most of the credit for persuading Muslims to regard Copts as genuine Egyptians, gave birth to an article of faith which was frequently repeated. According to this conviction, Copts and Muslims have lived in harmony since the Arab conquest and are one and not two peoples.[159] Once, when Copts were accused of presenting special demands as the price of their participation in the revolution, Miṣr indignantly denied the charge and said that the Coptic experience of Muslim rule had not led the Copts to fear that they would be excluded from a share in government.[160] A month later, Miṣr wrote of the love and ties which had bound Muslims and Copts from the time of the Arab conquest.[161] Peaceful co-existence in past and present were stressed and the former was used to buttress the latter. It became almost treasonous to suggest that there were any disagreements between the two communities.

Some Copts, accepting that the British presence contributed to their security, described the period immediately after the 1882 Occupation as a golden age in Coptic history.[162] However, even with all the intercommunal problems in the period before the First World War, the Copts were willing to blame some of their problems on the British. The need for an outside scapegoat increased after the 1919 revolution, although some writers preferred to pretend that no inter-communal tensions which demanded the presence of an agent provocateur in fact existed. Even in the troubled 1950s, some Copts continued to maintain that Christians and Muslims had been equal until the time of

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159. See, for example, Miṣr, 23 April 1919, quoted in FO.371/3717, 78459/24930/16.
160. Miṣr, 25 April 1919, quoted in FO.371/3717, 78459/24930/16.
161. Miṣr, 21 May 1919, p.1.
162. Ramzī Tādrus, the Coptic biographer, is one who did. Seikaly, The Copts under British Rule, p.172.

the Occupation.[163] The pre-Occupation Egyptian government was said to have treated all of its subjects equally:

> ....the different Islamic governments which successively ruled over Egypt, and which you [the British] count as despotic and tyrannic, did not treat their members in such a way as you have treated them. History is before you and it tells you that when the Muslims occupied Egypt in the early part of the seventh century they contented themselves with supervising the principal affairs of the country and left the administration of all its affairs in the hands of its owners, the Copts, who continued to conduct all administrative and financial affairs, century after century....It is true that the Copts were responsible for many events in those dark ages which harmed them, but it was the rabble and the ignorant which cause problems while the princes and the governors denied them....When the English occupied Egypt in 1882 the Copts filled all the principal offices in the government....(and the English deprived them of them).[164]

As the Egyptians moved away from the revolution in time, they felt less compelled to see the whole past as rosy. Copt-Muslim relations before 1919 were portrayed accurately as black. This was done not in the interest of historical truth but to glorify the revolution and Zaghlūl, the man who brought Copts and Muslims together.[165] From the late 1930s, there is little concern with a mythology of Copt-Muslim brotherhood, beyond some rather feeble assertions that they were one people because ethnic problems were again on the rise. Present disunity made past unity seem unlikely. The Copts longed for the golden days of the revolution and were disappointed with the failure of the polity to live up to its theoretical underpinnings.[166] This

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163. Zaghlūl Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud: al-Waḥda al-Waṭaniyya wa-al-'Akhlāq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo n.d.), p.10. One contemporary writer, Muhammad Kailānī, suggests that problems were due partly to the British and partly to some misguided Copts. See his al-'Adab al-Qibṭī, p.70.
164. Miṣr, 11 November 1921, p.1.
165. Miṣr, 25 July 1931, p.1.
166. Miṣr, 27 and 28 August 1951, p.1.

perhaps is mainly indicative of a human tendency to see past eras as untroubled and placid. One Copt proposed in 1951 the formation of a Committee of Historical Studies which could remind people of the good old days and the role the Copts had played in the national movement.[167]

Certainly the Copts became more sceptical of any Muslim insistence on the historical tolerance of Islam in theory and practice.[168] The Society of the Coptic Nation helped disillusion any remaining romantics by exploring all eras of Coptic history, including the more sorry ones. Copts today describe the 1918-52 period as a golden age in communal relations and often react sharply to any suggestion that there were problems.[169] The Nasser era is remembered at least by well-off Copts, most unpleasantly;[170] these people have good reasons for preferring the constitutional monarchy. At least until late 1979, Sadat's rule was portrayed favourably and was described by one Copt as a silver period.[171] Since then the increase in communal tensions has altered Coptic perceptions, and even the Nasser era may now appear in a more favourable light.

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167. Misr, 13 August 1951, p.1.
168. Two books on the subject of Muslim-Copt relations, Mīkhā'īl's Farriq Tasud, and Jāk Tājir's al-'Aqbāt w-al-Muslimūn (Cairo 1951) were banned by the government when they were published in the early 1950s. The government was not eager to have these relations scrutinized. D.W., ᶜĀbdīn Palace Archives, Ṭawā'if Dīniyya 1.
169. Interview, Kamāl al-Malākh, the Coptic Assistant Chief Editor of al-'Ahrām, 9 November 1978.
170. Nasser's pronounced pan-Arab policy led some Copts to recall Maspero's 1908 lecture and to regard Egypt's Pharaonic heritage as once again their unique possession. See the speech by a Ministry of Education official, Kāmil Mīkhā'īl al-Saᶜīd on 27 January 1955 at a church in Shubrā, Al-'Aqbāt 'Ibna' al-Farāᶜina (Cairo 1956), p.37.
171. Interview, Kamāl al-Malākh, 9 November 1978.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS

A. The Legal Framework: The Egyptian Constituion

At the 'Asyūṭ Conference in 1911, Mikhā'īl Fānūs voiced the sentiment of many Copts when he asked people to set aside the idea that the Copts constituted a group apart from the rest of the nation.[1] The law had long recognized and even reinforced religious differences, and when there was talk of drafting a constitution in 1908, at the height of communal hostilities, many Copts feared that a constitution would perpetuate their inferior status. Their concern was premature because a constitution was not, in fact, drawn up until 1922.

The constitution is important not only because it set the framework for political activity in this period, but because the debate surrounding it illuminates different attitudes toward minorities and their place in the political system. Was the constitution, once in effect, able to fulfil Fānūs' hope and establish the ascendancy of one view of minorities over all others?

1. Civil Rights

Copts had long argued that although they shouldered an equal burden of the responsibilities of a citizen, they did not enjoy equality in the exercise of rights. Their freedom of worship was circumscribed by various regulations and was often hampered by the illegal interference of Muslims with religious processions. They suffered from discrimination in many areas of Egyptian life and hoped to cure it with a political system that granted them adequate representation. They expected the constitution

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1. The Coptic Congress Held at Assiout on March 6, 7 and 8, 1911: The Speeches (no place, n.d.), pp.6-12.

to recognize that civil and political equality so lavishly praised during the revolution.

The Constitutional Commission began meeting in April 1922 and was as representative as an appointed body opposed by the Wafd then could be. Wafdists had demanded the election of a constituent assembly which might have brought younger men of more radical views and diverse backgrounds into the deliberations. The Palace instead chose a small commission of notables, including four Copts.[2] The Wafd's boycott left both the political composition of the Commission and the deliberations of that body conservative. The Wafd, however, did interrupt its blanket opposition to the proceedings to take an influential stand at least on the subject of minority representation.

When Husain Rushdī, Chairman of the Commission, raised the issue of constitutional protection for minorities, he did so partly to banish the incubus of British intervention. He suggested several safeguards including freedom of worship and equality in political and civil rights.[3] His proposal was neither irregular nor unexpected. The Commission had studied several European constitutions, most of which made provisions of this kind, and had chosen the Belgian constitution as a model. Belgium had sectarian problems, and its constitution took communal fears and desires into account.

Rushdī told a subcommittee charged with the actual drafting that he wanted Egypt's minorities so well protected by the constitution that the British would have no grounds for maintaining the third Reserved Point. There was substantial agreement on both this and his suggested

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2. The four Copts were Tawfīq Dūs, Qalīnī Fahmī, 'Ilyās ᶜAwaḍ and Bishop Yu'ānnis.
3. Maḥāḍir al-Lajna Li-Wadᶜ al-Mabādi' al-ᶜĀmma, thirteenth session, 7 May 1922 (Cairo 1924).

guarantees.[4] Three articles were drafted and the subcommittee's report to the whole committee made clear that these were not a new departure but a recognition of historical fact. As the report stated, the Egyptians had always been equal under the law.[5] Despite a fair degree of religious tolerance, this claim was not precisely true; it was simply another example of making modernity acceptable by proving its coincidence with tradition. The Commission, meeting in August, approved these three articles and they appeared in the Constitution as Articles 3, 12 and 13. The first guarantees that the Egyptians were equal before the law and in right and duties; no distinction was to be made on the basis of origin, language or religion. Article 12 promised freedom of belief, and Article 13 freedom of worship as long as it did not infringe upon public order or morals.

None of these clauses officially recognized minorities; in a political sense, they did not exist. The principle of freedom of conscience could perhaps fairly be regarded as the modern equivalent of the old communal autonomy, although the Copts expected the new provision to be more far-reaching than the old. The guarantee of equal rights and duties was a radical departure and went well beyond what the old system had afforded non-Muslims. The question that occurred to few Copts in 1922 but to many in later years was the ability of a piece of paper, reflecting the opinions of a portion of the elite, to change popular attitudes. The government often found that it was unable to enforce those very guarantees of equality which the constitution provided.

The Commission's anticipation of British expectations was an important element in the acceptance of the idea of equality. Not only

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4. Maḍābit Lajnat al-Mabādi' al-ᶜĀmma, thirteenth session, 7 May 1922.
5. Taqrīr al-Lajna Li-Wadᶜ al-Mabādi' al-ᶜĀmma, Appendix I, Cairo 1927.

British but European expectations were a concern; such protections were an integral part of any modern, democratic constitution. These were simply safeguards which were, in this era, considered constitutional good form. Coptic participation in the revolution was fresh in the public mind; such guarantees could be portrayed, and sometimes were, as the "price" of this participation. There seems to have been no objection to the three articles, not even by those ʿulamāʾ on the Commission. Shaikh Muhammad Shākir, former Vice-Rector of al-'Azhar and a member of the 1913-14 Legislative Assembly, wrote to Rushdī that it was reasonable to guarantee every man the right to practise his faith.[6] Indeed, it was reasonable, but in the final reckoning Articles 3, 12 and 13 were over-shadowed, and to an extent even negated, by the provision making Islam the religion of state.

2. Catch 22: Islam, the Religion of the State

As noted, many Egyptians argued for a separation between religion and politics. The incorporation of an article naming Islam the religion of state made this impossible from the outset. The Commission, without demur from its non-Muslim members and with no discussion, agreed to its inclusion.[7] This article, as Subhī points out, did not create a new situation, but rather confirmed an old one.[8] Of course, a number of European constitutions named a religion of state, but the dynamic between religion and government in these countries was not what it was in the Islamic world. The Commission's members either

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6. This letter is included in Mahādir al-Lajna al-ʿAmma Li-Wadʿ al-Dustūr, Cairo, 1927.
7. When Shaikh Bakhīt proposed naming Islam the religion of state, the president said that he had previously solicited opinions on this subject and that all members unanimously agreed on its inclusion in the constitution. Ibid., p.51 (seventeenth session, 19 May 1922).
8. Muḥammad Khalīl Subḥī, Tārikh al-Hayāt al-Niyābiyya fī Misr, vol.5 (Cairo 1939), p.489.

failed to see or ignored the contradiction inherent in the special obligations this article imposed on the government and the promise of equality to all Egyptians, regardless of their religion.[9]

The 1911 Heliopolis Conference had insisted, despite it billing as a non-sectarian meeting, that Islam must be the official religion of Egypt. Not many Muslims would have dissented publicly in 1922; only the Wafd had the popular support to do so but it is unlikely that they would have been willing to run the risk. Zaghlūl knew, in 1924, that it taxed his popularity just to keep two Copts in his Cabinet, a much less drastic step. Few, if any, members of the Constitutional Commission were radical in their political ideas. Nor did the Palace subscribe to the time's most modern views, except those contributing to royal power; and it was conscious of its strong ties to the Islamic religious establishment. The ruler traditionally had a duty to protect and promote the worship of Islam; this became a task of the constitutional monarchy as well.

Curiously Copts both inside and outside the Commission do not seem to have objected strenuously to this clause, although some supporting special minority representation hoped in doing so to balance the naming of a state religion. The Copts seemed to feel that the Constitution adequately protected their interests, and they counted on the continuance of Muslim good will. After all, religious qualifications were given no formal political significance in the constitution; that document might even initially have been a spur to equality and unity. Copts frequently expressed a desire for a separation of Islam and politics; this general sentiment is not, however, equivalent to a clear statement

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9. Musʿad Ṣādiq, a journalist, was only one of several Copts to note this contradiction in later years. See Misr, 15 February 1951, p.1.

9a. El-Watan would have preferred to omit the latter. See 23 September 1922, p.2.

that there should be no state religion. In fact, in 1930 Salāma Mūsā rather curiously declared that he, as an Egyptian, was obliged to defend Islam because it was the religion of his country.[10] Makram ʿUbaid, in a similar but typically more glib statement, announced on several occasions that he was "a Muslim in country and a Christian in religion".

Copts only clearly began to voice their concern about being "Muslim in country" in later years when the protections and promised equality of the constitution were demonstrably inadequate. As Miṣr observed in 1951, the article naming a state religion had turned out to be the most important one.[11] By then it was less likely than ever that a formal separation between Islam and politics could be made. From the mid-1940s, Salāma Mūsā and others writing in the pages of Miṣr called for a constitutional amendment disestablishing Islam as the state religion.[12] In 1948 Murqus Sergius circulated a petition for signature among Copts calling for the separation of religion and state and for complete equality.[13] Miṣr criticized those Egyptians who called Israel a religious state when their own country was not exempt from the charge,[14] and Salāma Mūsā commented that religion ought not to be used to serve the interests of the state.[15]

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10. Colombe, who quotes this, does not mention the context. There is nothing similar to be found in Mūsā's Tarbiyyat Salāma Mūsā. Marcel Colombe, "L'Islam dans la vie sociale et politiuque de l'Egypte Contemporaine", Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain XXI (1950), 19.
11. Miṣr, 15 February 1951, p.1.
12. FO.371/53297, J2253/39/16; FO.371/3331, J2268/57/16; FO.371/53300, J2253/39/16; Miṣr, 4 April 1947, p.1; Miṣr, 18 January 1952, p.1.
13. He apparently drew up a petition, addressed to the Egyptian government, after receiving a number of petitions from individual Copts. His petition defended its demands by claiming that the Copts represented one-seventh (14.3 per cent) of the population and two-fifths of the tax payers. FO.141/1296, 506/3/48.
14. Miṣr, 5 October 1950, p.1.
15. In Miṣr, June 1948, quoted in Zaghīb Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud! Al-Waḥda al-Waṭaniyya w-al-'Akhlāq al-Qawmiyya (no place, n.d.), p.311.

By this time, the Copts had lived for several years with Article 149. It did not make Egypt a theocracy but it did oblige the government to build mosques, teach religion, train Imams, celebrate Muslim holidays and adhere, at least in part, to religious law.* In addition, the king was charged in the constitution with various religious responsibilities; he was, for example, the head of religious institutions. Public funds collected from Muslims and Copts, were distributed inequitably, and certain benefits accrued to one sector of the population alone.[16] Walter Smart, the Oriental Secretary, noted that enormous sums were spent on Islamic institutions while no similar or even proportional sum was allocated for Coptic institutions.[17] The income from Muslim endowments grew increasingly inadequate for funding Muslim institutions, and the government was obliged to fill the gap out of tax revenues. By 1946, almost 90 per cent of al-'Azhar's budget came directly from the government.[18] When that institution's budget was discussed in the Senate in 1939, Dr. 'Ibrāhīm Bayūmī Madkūr pleaded with his colleagues not to argue to over sums: Islam was the religion of state; it must be protected and religious education provided to coming generations.[19] Generally, neither the Senate nor the Chamber quibbled over al-'Azhar's budget, which between 1923 and 1937, increased by more than six times.[20] The government spent more per student on Islamic theological training than it did on secular education.[21]

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16. The Copts were not slow to note this, particularly since they felt they paid a disproportionate share of the taxes. See Murqus Fahmī's speech at the 'Asyūt Conference in 1911. The Coptic Congress Held at Assiout, pp.44-49; FO.141/1296, 506/3/48; Misr, 5 December 1946, p.1.
17. FO.141/749, 20/26/33; Misr, 5 December 1946, p.1.
18. Chamber Debates, second session, 23 July 1946.
19. Senate Debates, fourteenth session, 13 June 1939.
20. Budget of the Egyptian State, Cairo, 1923-27.
21. Russell Galt, The Effects of Centralization on Education in Modern Egypt (Cairo 1936), p.19.

* N. Tessler, "The identity of religious minorities in non-secular states - Jews in Tunisia and Morocco and Arabs in Israel", Comparative Studies in Society and History 20 (1978), p.360.

Copts seem never to have asked for an end to all religious allocations; they simply desired that the principle of equality or proportionality be recognized.[22] For example, it turned out to be impossible, despite Coptic importuning, for the Egyptian government to fund a proportional amount of Christian education for its Christian students. The government could not participate in training teachers of Christianity; nor could it pay their salaries and allocate both time and space in a public institution. In a general sense, then, Article 149 meant that some of the state's goals, when not harmful to Coptic interests,[23] were at least irrelevant to them.

The more serious problem was not the naming of a religion of state, but the fact that the much vaunted guarantees of freedom of worship and equality were not inviolable and were not really taken seriously. When a Coptic convert to Islam wished to return to Christianity, the court denied him permission on the grounds that the state's religion did not recognize the right of apostacy. Ramsīs Jabrāwī very properly noted that this contradicted the constitution's promise of freedom of belief.[24]

Ultimately, Article 149's reinforcement of the traditional relationship between Islam and government prevented the full political integration of the Copts and made a secular polity legally impossible. How could the Copts be part of a national community which undertook as one of its tenets the necessity of defending and promoting Islam?

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22. See Murqus Fahmī's speech, The Coptic Congress Held at Assiout, pp.44-49.
23. Included in this would be, for example, support for Muslim missionary enterprises.
24. Al-Manāra al-Miṣriyya, 5 March 1951, quoted in The Cry of Egypt's Copts (New York 1951), pp.12-13.

3. The Representation of Minorities in Parliament

Even before the Constitutional Commission met, the question of granting minorities proportional representation in parliament was raised and a heated public discussion ensued.[25] The idea was not unprecedented. 'Akhnūkh Fānūs' short-lived political party had hinted at the desirability of guaranteed representation in its 1908 platform. At the 1911 'Asyūṭ conference, Murqus Ḥannā pointed to the Belgian system of proportional representation and implied that Egypt would do well to emulate this arrangement.[26] When no Copts were elected to the 1913-14 Legislative Assembly, four were appointed, recognizing at least informally the need to make some arrangement for a minority voice.[27]

When the subject came up in 1922, it divided partly along Wafd - non-Wafd lines.[28] Those Muslims supporting minority representation tended to be hostile to the Wafd and included the followers of ʿAdlī and Tharwat. The same generalization cannot comfortably be made about the Copts. Some who advocated proportional representation were bound by the horizon of the community. The Wafd and the National Party opposed minority representation; they kept the debate on this

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25. The Residency noted that in May minority representation was the burning issue. However, this issue in general did not have the emotional impact of the Sudan question. FO.371/7742, E5554/61/6/
26. Ḥannā first says that he objects to the idea of allowing the Copts a certain number of seats in elected bodies but later he proposed a scheme which would, in operation, be the equivalent of this. The Coptic Conference Held at Assiout, pp.36-8.
27. The four were Q alīnī Fahmī Pasha, Murqus Simaika Bek, Sinūt Ḥanna Bek, Kāmil Ṣidqī Bek. That no objections were voiced to these appointments may be an indication of the extent to which Kitchener was able to calm troubled communal waters. Severianus, "Les Coptes de l'Egypte Musulmane", Etudes Méditerranéennes 6 (1959), p.80.
28. Ṭāriq al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.126.

subject within the framework of the nationalist struggle against the Occupation.[29]

There were two main arguments. The first was one of necessity. As Tawfīq Dūs pointed out, few Copts had won seats on Egypt's representative bodies; what guarantee had they that now they would be elected? Their guarantee, answered his opponents, was to be found in the events of the revolution and its aftermath. A new pattern had been set: Copts would be elected because of the interests they represented and the skills they possessed or defeated because of the lack therefore, and not because they were Copts.

The second point of discussion was whether minority representation would encourage or discourage British intervention to protect minorities. Those who took the latter view predicted that, because there would be no arrangement which would permit minorities to vent complaints, the British would be called upon to interfere on their behalf. Opponents claimed that guaranteed representation would encourage intervention because the scheme was a British plot to divide the Egyptian people; an unjust allegation since the British were content merely to record this debate.

In a subcommittee meeting in May, Tawfīq Dūs recommended fixed minority representation.[30] He pointed to the 1914 Legislative Assembly and suggested that minorities must have a voice in any body deciding on laws which would affect them as well as Muslim Egyptians. He proposed the following plan: elections would be held and, if an

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29. Ibid., p.127. Newspapers divided according to their political allegiance. Among those opposed to minority representation were al-'Afkār, al-'Akhbār, Wādī al-Nīl, al-Liwā', al-Baṣīr and Miṣr. Al-Waṭan, al-Istiqlāl, Revue Egyptienne and La Liberté supported it, Al-Muqaṭṭam and al-'Ahrām, after publicizing both sides, remained non-committal.

30. Maḥāḍir al-Lajna Li-Wadᶜ al-Mabādiʾ al-ᶜĀmma, thirteenth session, 7 May 1922, Cairo 1924.

inadequate number of minorities were elected, either a second general election, with Muslims and Copts voting, could be held to make up the Coptic quota or the Chamber could elect the number needed from among those minority candidates who had lost.

ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd Badawī, chief legal adviser to the subcommittee, objected and pointed out that the British were not insisting on special representation for minorities. He presented as evidence those post-World War I treaties which only promised Eastern European minorities the protection of their civil rights. Dūs, like earlier Copts, had quoted from the Belgian constitution, but Badawī insisted that the Flemish and Walloon communities were political and not religious groups. He added that the Egyptian Chamber was designed as a political body with deputies representing the whole country, and not merely a religious sect. Badawī believed that minority representation would fix the importance of a religious division which otherwise would diminish.

In a later meeting, Badawī suggested that it was political heresy (bidᶜa) to incorporate religious or racial minorities in Western representative institutions. He added that if the Copts were granted a fixed number of seats, it would be difficult to deny seats to the other minorities, including foreign ones, in Egypt. Cromer's plan would then be realized and Egypt would be a "stage for religious and racial discord".[31] Badawī insisted that they did not have the competence to draw up this kind of a constitution.

Dūs commented that however equal all Egyptians were made in the constitution, differences would continue to exist; the monarch, for

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31. Subcommittee Minutes, 11 May 1922.

example, would always be a Muslim.[32] The subcommittee's discussion made no progress and, after rejecting a suggestion that Coptic notables be invited to express their views, members decided to hold the matter for the full committee.

It is interesting to speculate on Dūs' motives. He was not known for his interest in the welfare of his community, but it is possible that he thought that minority representation would fix his own star in the political firmament. He was reasonably close to the Patriarch and may have been acting at his behest. Dūs spent part of May on a propaganda tour of 'Asyūt[33] and, ignoring a subcommittee ban, published his views in al-'Ahrām.[34] He felt compelled to disagree publicly with the many newspapers calling minority representation a British plot to divide Egypt; he insisted he was concerned not with the welfare of the Copts but with the danger Egypt faced without minority representation. Dūs was criticized by the press and was accused of representing himself and not the Copts; otherwise, wrote one paper, he would not have joined the ᶜAdlī Government when all his co-religionists were opposing it.[35] Salāma Mikhā'īl wrote in the pages of al-'Akhbār:

> Let Tawfīq Dūs know that the Copts prefer to sustain all the sufferings he fears to come from their compatriots rather than record in the constitution....that which makes them look like foreigners....and impute to their compatriots the charge of fanaticism and ungratefulness. It is far better for them

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32. The Constitution did not specify that the King had to be a Muslim. Article 30, however, stipulated that only a member of the family of Muhammad ᶜAlī could sit on the throne.
33. Al-Waṭan, 19 May 1922, PPF.
34. Al-'Ahrām, 15 May 1922, p.1. See also 26 May 1922, PPF.
35. Al-'Afkār, 15 May 1922, PPF. Wādī al-Nīl made a similar comment, suggesting that his position became clear when it was realized that he was an ᶜAdlist and a friend of the English. Wādī al-Nīl, 17 May 1922, PPF.

> to lose everything than to see the constitution....contain a clause on which the foreigner can rely in accusing the Egyptians of backwardness and mistrust of each other and of still clinging to old religious differences....thereby finding a way of intervention in the....internal affairs of their country.[36]

Perhaps the most sophisticated debate to appear in the press was the one which occurred between Maḥmūd ʿAzmī and ʿAzīz Mīrhum.[37] The first was a Muslim and the second a Copt, and both were committed secularists and charter members of the short-lived Democratic Party. Mīrhum opposed minority representation while ʿAzmī supported it. The latter, chief editor of al-Istiqlāl, published a series of articles which one Egyptian scholar claims were inspired by the British in an attempt to divide Muslims and Copts.[38] ʿAzmī, claiming that national solidarity demanded minority representation, backed Dūs' proposal without reserve. The Egyptians, he wrote, were still motivated by religion and, it was only fair, when a state religion had been fixed, to regard religious groups as political groups and to have those groups represented in Parliament.[39] His paper claimed that most Copts were afraid to express their approval of fixed representation, and therefore was pleased when 'Ilyās ʿAwād announced that the Patriarch supported the idea.[40]

Very early in the debate Mīrhum warned of the danger of dividing the country into a majority and minorities. He said that if the Christian members of the Commission presented themselves as

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36. Al-'Akhbār, 18 May 1922, p.3.
37. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.117.
38. Muḥammad Sayyid Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibṭi Qadīman-wa-Ḥadīthan (Cairo 1962), p.168. Here he is merely echoing what many Wafdists believed. The belief seems an illogical one unless Wafdists assumed that Egyptian minorities were inherently less loyal to Egypt.
39. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), pp.117-8.
40. Al-'Istiqlāl, 22 June 1922, p.1.

representative of Coptic opinion, they lied.[41] Mīrhum insisted that such divisions were anachronisms; political and economic groups would grow out of them, and the constitution should aid this process and not hinder it.[42] In his eyes, ʿAzmī was denying those secular and democratic ideas in which he claimed to believe, and he attacked ʿAzmī for mingling religious, social and political questions. He believed that granting the minorities special seats meant that they would never be absorbed into the body politic; religion would always be tied to government.

ʿAzmī also wished to eliminate the importance religious expressions had in social and political life. Until this could be done across the board, there would still be a majority and a minority; nationalism was not enough to unite the two as long as family, education, the court system and other factors prevented a full blending of the different ethnic groups. He insisted that as long as the constitution did not abolish outmoded special principles and institutions, the minorities needed special representation.[43]

Salāma Mūsā felt that minority representation was pointless since the Muslim majority would have enough votes to pass any law it wanted and could also defeat any minority bill it opposed.[44] If, he wrote, communal representatives were able to reach their goals through alliances and agreements with other parties, then they would have exceeded their specific minority role.

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41. Al-'Ahrām, 11 May 1922, p.1.
42. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.118.
43. Ibid., pp.119-20. Both these men were active in lecturing and organizing support for their views.
44. Kailānī, al-'Adab al-Qibtī, p.168.

In May Taha Husain was moved to pick up his pen. He too blamed the British for this disagreement; once again, they were trying to foment discord between moderates and extremists and between Muslims and non-Muslims. He wrote that Egypt had begun to follow European ways and accordingly the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims were disappearing little by little:

> Every equality exists between Muslims and non-Muslims, but some want to keep the minority separate and give it a special existence it has not got now. They want Christians equal before the law but separate from Muslims with special representation. They wrong both the majority and the minority.[45]

Our new government, he continued inaptly, would have no tie to religion. The king would receive his power, through the constitution, from all the Egyptian people and not from Islam.

The Coptic community had mixed reactions to proportional representation. The Orthodox were split, whereas the Council of the Evangelical Church supported it.[46] Monseigneur Sidfawī, Head of the Coptic Catholic community, commented in an interview that those Coptic Catholics to whom he had talked feared that minority representation would harm national unity; the Monseigneur cautiously refrained from offering his own opinion.

The Orthodox Majlis Millī sent a message supporting minority representation to the Constitutional Commission.[47] Misr invited the Lay Council to a meeting in an attempt to persuade them to reverse

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45. Al-'Ahrām, 23 May 1922, p.1. Doris Behrens Abu Saif suggests that Taha Husain believed that proportional representation would give the Copts the means to create a state within a state. Die Kopten in der Ägyptischen Gesellschaft von der Mitte 19 Jahrhundert bis 1923, (Freiburg 1972), p.94.
46. Al-Istiqlāl, 17 June 1922, p.1.
47. The Vice-Presidents of the Copt Councils in Tantā, Banhā and other towns also supported minority representation.

their decision but failed. The Orthodox Bishops of 'Isnā, Dair al-Muharraq, al-Minyā and Sanbū also made known their support. The Patriarch initially kept a low profile; this equivocation, which al-Bishrī suggests was intentional,[48] led each side to claim his support. Al-'Anbā Yu'ānnis, as his representative on the Constitutional Commission, took no stand on this issue in the Subcommittee discussion. However, it appears that the Patriarch supported minority representation; the church, as the most well-organized and articulate of the community's institutions, could only gain by it. The church had no serious communal rival at that time, and it could easily have influenced or dominated the communal members of parliament. Finally, in June, the Patriarch came out in an interview in favour of the idea. Wafdist Copts formed a deputation to plead their case before the Patriarch but he refused to see them. Curiously, he gave two interviews after this and managed in both to obscure his position.[49]

The conservative Coptic newspaper, al-Watan, may have been the first to advocate proportional representation. In an article published in March, the paper, after going to lyrical lengths to demonstrate Coptic loyalty to Egypt, reminded its audience that the Copts were still a minority. They wanted to serve their country and share in the work of the legislature, yet they feared that they might not be represented in that body.[50] The following day, al-Watan suggested that it was in Egypt's interest to protect her minorities in order to deprive Britain of the right to meddle.[51] The denial of

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48. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.123.
49. FO.407/194, Enclosure in No.12. Situation Report, 20-30 June 1922.
50. Al-Watan, 8 March 1922, p.1.
51. Al-Watan, 9 March 1922, p.2.

parliamentary representation would lead the minorities to complain, and their complaints would result in foreign intervention.[52] Al-Waṭan claimed that, except for Badawī, the only ones opposed to communal representation were Wafdists; even the Beduin wanted special rights written into the constitution.[53]

There were many Coptic critics of proportional representation,[54] but the most vehement ones were Wafdists, many of whom resisted the idea on the grounds of nationalism or secularism.[55] Zaghlūl was an old opponent, believing that Parliament should divide on issue or party lines and not ethnic ones.[56] Characteristically, both the Wafd and Miṣr denied that there were minorities in Egypt; all Egyptians were of one race and no Egyptian Copt had an identity separate from his Muslim brother.[57] Miṣr was very concerned that minority representation would constitute a legal separation between Muslims and non-Muslims.[58] The paper argued that, although Egypt was still officially a religious state, religion would not be relied upon for political ideology. Miṣr published letters and telegrams from many Copts who were opposed to guaranteed representation.

On 12 May the Wafd announced its official belief that minority representation would be a prop for the British; division had been the policy of Milner, Curzon and all of Egypt's enemies, and it was incompatible with the welfare of the nation.[59] Most important Coptic

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52. Al-Waṭan, 17 May 1922, quoted in al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.122.
53. Al-Waṭan, 13 May 1922, PPF.
54. Al-'Ahrām, 27 May 1922, p.4.
55. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.126.
56. Al-Niẓām, 8 October 1920, p.2.
57. Miṣr, 14 May 1922, p.3.
58. Miṣr, 17 May 1922, p.1.
59. This statement was signed by what were probably the eight most important Wafdists then in Egypt. Their number included four Copts: George Khayyāṭ, Murqus Ḥannā, Wāṣif Ghālī and Wīsā Wāṣif. ʿAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī also thought that minority representation would be divisive and would buttress the British to protect minorities. DW. Maḥfaẓa Raqm 1, Makhtūṭ 19, Memoirs of ʿAbd al-Raḥman Fahmī, 12 May 1922, p.1953.

Wafdists wrote in the press on this issue, including, as already noted, Salāma Mikhā'īl. Wīsā Wāsif published an article in La Bourse Egyptienne insisting that only political parties be represented in parliament; Copts who won seats would be present as deputies and not Copts.[60] Rāghib 'Iskandar warned of rebellion (fitna) if Parliament were divided along ethnic lines. Parliament, he added, was not meant to act as a religious council.[61] To supplement this writing, Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr propaganized in Jirjā, and Najīb 'Iskandar at the Ramsīs Club and in Cairo.[62]

Coptic Wafdists called for a community meeting to be held on 19 May 1922 at St. Peter's Church in Cairo.[63] Between 100 and 500 Copts turned up[64] and they applauded Zaghlūl, his exiled comrades and Salāma Mikhā'īl. Salāma gave two speeches in which he attacked minority representation as heretical (bidʿa). He gave the crowd examples of the important role Copts played in the Wafd, and said that it would be unfortunate to exchange a representation based on feelings for a representation based on law. Wīsā Wāsif, 'Antūn Jirjis 'Antūn, Shaikh Mustafā al-Qayātī and others also spoke. A final report was issued attacking minority representation as heretical and dangerous to national unity.[65]

In July al-'Azhar advertized its views. In a letter to the Head of the Royal Diwan, the ʿulamā' complained about an article written by

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60. La Bourse Egyptienne, 13 May 1922; quoted in al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 (1971), pp.127-8.
61. Ibid., p.128.
62. FO.407/193, E5709/61/16.
63. This meeting apparently was organized by Salāma Mikhā'īl, Jirjis 'Antūn, Najīb 'Iskandar and Talʿat Saʿat. FO.407/193, Enclosure in No.62, Situation Report, 18-24 May 19221.
64. The Residency recorded attendance of 120 (ibid.), and al-Bishrī the higher figure, al-Kātib 119 (1971), p.129.
65. Ibid., p.129.

Maḥmūd ᶜAzmī.[66] This article had advocated both secularism and minority representation, and the ᶜulemā' asked for an injunction to prevent ᶜAzmī from publishing articles against Islam. They probably were more upset by his advocacy of secularism than by his support for minority representation. Their letter only pointed to the danger of raising the latter subject when the country had achieved unity.

It does seem that the opponents of minority representation were in the majority. The King, for once in agreement with the Wafd, does not seem to have approved of the idea.[67] This must have been clear in the minds of the members of the Constitutional Commission when they took up the matter in August.[68] Dūs began by noting that the press debate had been acrimonious, and he pointed in particular to an article in al-'Ahrām by the Watanist, 'Ibrāhīm Desūqī 'Abāza, who claimed that the Copts desired minority representation because they had no faith in Muslims or in the new political arrangements. The Copts, claimed Dūs, were intimidated by the such statements and felt unable to present their real views. Dūs, after repeating his personal opinion, stated that the Patriarch favoured minority representation. Presumably, he had some authority to make this claim.

'Ibrāhīm al-Hilbawī and ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Fahmī countered Dūs' views, and the latter suggested that Dūs proposed making elections a struggle between religions rather than between political parties and ideas. Dūs here suggested a weighting of the electorate which would give 20 per cent of the seats to minorities. A proportional scheme, based

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66. DW ᶜĀbdīn Palace Archives, Royal Diwan, al-'Azhār Qisr 1.
67. Pierre Rondot, "L'Evolution historique des Coptes d'Égypte", Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain 22 (1950), p.138. Unfortunately, Rondot does not offer any support for his claim other than that, to him, it is commonsense.
68. Maḥādir al-Lajna al-ᶜĀmma Li-Waḍᶜ al-Dustūr, 27th session, 25 August 1922, Cairo 1927.

on the 1917 census, would have given the minorities a much smaller number. Yūsuf Qattawī, representing the Jewish community, and Metropolitan Yu'ānnis agreed with Dūs' views. The Metropolitan claimed that minority representation would help preserve unity. Badawī, the most articulate member of the opposition on the Commission, unaccountably was absent, but ʿAlī Māhir upheld his views. Qalīnī Fahmī, here serving his master the King rather than the Patriarch, joined the opposition. A vote was taken and Dūs' proposal was defeated by a vote of fifteen to seven.

Ṭāriq al-Bishrī calls the defeat of proportional representation a victory for those supporting nationalism and secularism.[69] The victors did not wish to deprive the Copts of parliamentary seats. They genuinely believed that the voters would not choose candidates according to an ethnic criterion but because they represented an important interest or had useful campaigning skills. They did not see the Copts as a minority in the Eastern European or even Belgian sense, and believed that Dūs' reminder of the failure of any Copts to be elected to the 1914 Legislative Assembly was irrelevant. Coptic Wafdists perhaps feared to lose their influence in party councils if they suddenly became the representatives of a small and insignificant community. If Copts were awarded seats because they were Copts, they could not claim to represent the nation; any political role they wished to play would be circumscribed by their ethnic origin.

The quarrel was not cast in ethnic or religious terms, if only because so many Copts vigorously opposed the idea. Muslim intimidation does not seem to have been a factor in this Coptic position. Since

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69. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 119 '1971), p.129.

most people then seemed to be backing the Wafd, most people supported the Wafd's objection to the scheme. Although the issue perhaps would not have arisen in a Wafdist-dominated constituent assembly, the Wafd probably was less annoyed with the idea of proportional representation than it was with the appointment of a commission by its opponents. It was the latter who were developing the political framework within which the Wafd would have to operate. The party was then in an awkward position with most of its important leaders in exile or under arrest, and minority representation was a good issue for rallying the faithful. Political "moderates" were at least willing to consider the question, and those on the Commission might have backed Dūs had it been clear that this community was behind him, and also had there been less Wafd and Royal opposition and more British support. Even had the Commission agreed to guaranteed seats, the minorities would not thereby have acquired any substantial power.

B. Coptic Political Representation, 1924-1952

1. The Chamber of Representatives

Elections for the Lower House were held more frequently than for the Senate. Eligibility, with no property or status restrictions, was relatively open, and some members were accused of illiteracy by their political opponents. Due to changes in the election law, some elections were direct and others indirect. Election boycotts were not uncommon and doubtless eased the task of those who chose to compete. Sometimes a coalition of parties was formed and constituencies divided before an election. Both factors help explain the surprising number of candidates returned unopposed. The voters in approximately one-half of the constituencies which elected Copts in this period had no

choice. Occasionally, of course, a party failed to nominate a candidate because it realized that the opposing party's candidate was likely to win. In addition, only the Wafd seemed to have the support and financial ability necessary to field a candidate in almost every constituency.

Copts were adequately represented in the Chamber. The position of the opponents of minority representation was vindicated by the first election in 1924 when more Copts won seats than would have been allocated to them using the 1917 census.[70] The percentage of seats occupied by Copts often topped their official proportion of the population; however, it never equalled or exceeded the more probable estimate of 10 per cent. In some Chambers, Coptic representation was surprisingly low.

Year[71]	Number of Copts	Number of Seats	Percentage of Coptic Seats
1924	16	214	7.5
1925	13	214	6.1
1926	16	214	7.5
1929	20	235	8.5
1931	4	150	2.6
1936	20	232	8.8
1938	6	264	2.3
1942	23	264	8.7
1945	12	264	4.5
1950	8	320	2.5

What is immediately apparent to someone familiar with this period is that the Copts won more seats whenever the Wafd won an election; that is, in 1924, 1929, 1936 and 1942. Coptic representation was

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70. This election was indirect and Jacques Berque thinks that 15 to 25 per cent of the major electors were Copts. Jacques Berque, Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution, transl. Jean Stewart (London 1972), p.365.
71. Ṭāriq al-Bishrī has done similar computations (al-Kātib 121 (1971), p.165), but has arrived at slightly different figures for some years. The above statistics are based on Muḥammad Ṣubḥī's Taʾrīkh al-Ḥayāt al-Niyābiyya fī Miṣr, and were cross-checked with The Egyptian Directory. Professors ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm and Megalli, of The School of Oriental and African Studies and the Central London Polytechnic respectively, helped in distinguishing indeterminate names.

adequate in two Chambers with strong Wafdist representation: the short-lived 1925 Chamber[72] which was less than half Wafdist, and the coalition assembly of 1926. Most of the Copts who won seats in these last two elections were Wafdists. The 1931 elections, overseen by the Sidqī Government, were not an accurate expression of popular feeling; and few Copts were nominated or returned.[73] The 1938 elections were exceptionally corrupt and its victors made heavy use of religious and anti-Coptic propaganda. It is not surprising to find that the winning parties nominated few Copts and that few of those who did run were elected. Although the 1945 Chamber was dominated by a non-Wafdist coalition, more Copts were elected to seats because of the participation of the al-Kutla party. The latter, organized by Makram ʿUbaid, nominated two-thirds of the successful Coptic candidates in this election.

Given this pattern which suggests both that the Wafd had more Coptic support and that the Copts were more influential within this party than within other parties, the 1950 election constitutes an anomaly. The 1950 election was a dramatic victory for the Wafd, at last come in from six years in the political wilderness. The party presented only seven Copts to the electorate[74] and the Copts consequently won fewer seats than they had in the 1931 elections. This low figure indicates that Coptic support for the Wafd had declined and/or that the Wafd was unwilling or unable to replace those Copts who had walked out with Makram ʿUbaid in 1942. Most of al-Kutla's Coptic candidates

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72. The pressure of the Administration was used against Wafdist candidates in this election. However, many Independents turned Wafdist when it came time to elect the Chamber's President.
73. The Wafd and the Liberal Constitutionalists boycotted this election.
74. Three Copts, one of whom was Mirrīt Bey Ghālī, ran as Independents, but as Miṣr noted, it was very difficult for Independents to get elected. Miṣr, 26 November 1949, p.1. Al-Kutla nominated seven Copts. See al-Balāgh for all nominations, 30 December, 31 December and 4 January 1950, p.6. The Wafd's seven Coptic nominees plus Mirrīt were the eight who won seats in the Chamber.

were ex-Wafdists, and the party failed to secure any seats in the 1950 election. Between Copts forfeited to al-Kutla and the Grim Reaper, the Wafd lost most of its important Coptic members, including men who had been in the party since 1919 and had impeccable revolutionary credentials. These were politicians who commanded considerable popular support, at least in association with the Wafd, and it was hard for the party to find adequate substitutes. This task was made even more difficult by the increase in communal tensions in the late 1940s. At one time, the mass of Muslim Egyptians, who were mainly Wafdist in sympathy, probably were more willing to countenance the election of a Coptic Wafdist than a Coptic Liberal Constitutionalist or Ittiḥādist. By 1950, the Muslim population may have been less willing to vote for any Copt, whatever his party affiliation. The low number of Copts nominated in 1950 perhaps also supports the contention that the Copts had largely withdrawn from the political arena in response to what they saw as their worsening position. They believed that the Wafd had forsaken them. Miṣr complained that the party had seen fit to nominate so few Copts;[75] that Miṣr did not do so on earlier occasions indicates that it did not have the same expectations of non-Wafdist governments.

Few Copts were elected officers of the Chamber. The Wafd attempted to have Wīsā Wāṣif elected one of the two Vice-Presidents in 1924 and failed.[76] It had better luck the following two years and in 1928 was able to secure his election to the Presidency of the Chamber.[77] Wīsā's role in leading Parliament in passing a vote of

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75. Miṣr, 7 July 1950, p.1.
76. An 'Asyūṭī Muslim was elected instead and the British commented that, while this was supposed to have been a revolt against Wafdist autocratic methods by Upper Egyptian deputies, Wīsā's religion was probably against him. FO.407/198, No.109. Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, 22 March 1924.
77. The 1928 election had its opponents. Both the Liberal al-Kashkūl and the National Party's al-'Akhbār wrote that the President of the Chamber should profess the religion of state. FO.470/206, No.73 (Enclosure 7), Memorandum on the Egyptian Press, 22 March-4 April 1928.

no confidence in the government which had just illegally dissolved it in 1928 helped ensure his re-election in the Wafd-dominated Chamber of 1930. In 1936 Kāmil Ṣidqī, another Wafdist, was elected Chamber Vice-President.

Copts were returned from a wide range of constituencies, with Coptic populations which varied in size. Setting aside urban constituencies in Cairo and Alexandria, about two-thirds of the districts which returned Copts were in Upper Egypt and one-third in the Delta. The only delta province never to elect any Copts was al-Sharqiyya, but one scholar has noted that generally Delta constituencies sent Copts to Parliament only when the Wafd won an election.[78] Copts were returned from every Upper Egyptian province except from al-Faiyūm and the predominantly Nubian 'Aswān. Both had fewer Copts than any other Upper Egyptian province, and one of the 'Aswān seats was usually reserved for a member of the Jewish community. That Copts often were elected from constituencies with a very small percentage of Coptic inhabitants indicates a certain acceptance of their political role by Muslims, although election often had less to do with the number of Copts in a district than the number of feddans owned by Copts or the party affiliation of the Coptic candidates. It also says something about the strength of the Wafd, which was, for example, the only party that could get a Coptic candidate elected in a Delta constituency. Copts were returned from several Cairene constituencies, including the heavily Coptic Shubrā and Ezbekia and from two Alexandrian districts where many Copts lived, al-Labbān and al-ʿAttārīn.

No district seems to have been automatically allocated to Coptic candidates. Even Christian Ezbekia, which included the Patriarchate,

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78. Al-Bishrī, al-Kātib 121 (1971), p.165.

was sometimes consigned to and won by a Muslim candidate. There were constituencies, however, in which it is difficult to imagine a Copt running and, while they were theoretically open to Christian candidates, no Copts were nominated to stand in them. Examples of such districts are the exclusively Muslim Darb al-'Ahmār in Cairo and Tantā, a city of some religious significance in the Delta.

Wafdists occasionally ran in two constituencies in the same elections, although Makram ʿUbaid seems to have been the only Wafdist Copt to have done so. In 1926 he ran in his home constituency of Qinā town and in Matūbis, al-Gharbiyya, a district with few Copts. He won both seats and relinquished the latter to a Muslim replacement. In 1929 he ran again in Qinā and also in al-Muskī, Cairo, an almost exclusively Muslim constituency. Again, he won both seats. This perhaps was meant to prove that one of the Wafd's important Copts had as much Muslim support as Christian. It may also have been done to preserve the seat for a Wafdist or to indicate that Wafdists could be elected outside those constituencies where their families had land and influence. Unfortunately, these conclusions seem a little forced given that Makram was the only candidate running in Matūbis and al-Muskī in these elections. In 1938 he ran in Shubrā and Qinā but he, along with most other Wafdists, failed to win a seat.

Coptic representatives in the Chamber did not differ in background from their Muslim colleagues. Many were wealthy landowners and others were middle-class professionals. The latter were mainly lawyers, with a sprinkling of medical doctors.[79] Coptic ecclesiastics were not elected, although Muslim shaikhs sometimes were.

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79. In the 1924 Chamber, proportionately more Coptic Wafdists had urban occupations than did Muslim Wafdists.

2. The Senate

The requirements for election or appointment to the Senate were more rigorous than those for election to the Chamber. Essentially service was restricted to the well-to-do of at least 40 years of age. Candidates who did not meet certain professional requirements were obliged to pay an annual land tax of £E150,[80] or show proof of an annual income of £E1,500.[81]

Three-fifths of the Senate were elected in three-stage elections and two-fifths appointed. This ratio was reversed in the Sidqī constitution of 1930 and the total number of seats decreased. Appointments were made by the government in power, with the consent of the King.[82] Terms were for ten years with replacement of half the seats every five years. Replacements were selected in 1930, 1941-2, 1946 and 1950. In addition, several governments cynically invalidated the appointments and elections of their predecessors and made new ones. The entire Senate was replaced in 1931 and 1936. Senators were also unseated in 1942, 1944 and 1950; those who were dislodged in 1942 were restored in 1944, and the 1942 candidates ousted.

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80. As the land tax was approximately £E1 per feddan, those who met this prerequisite owned 150 feddans. Cromer saw 50 feddans as the dividing line between big and small landowners. Ra'uf ʿAbbās Ḥāmid accepts his distinction, although somewhat reluctantly, and applies it in his own work on landownership. See al-Nizām al-'Ijtimāʿī fī Miṣr, 1837-1914 (Cairo 1973), pp.24-6, 189.

81. ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Rāfiʿī, Fī ʿAqāb al-Thawra al-Miṣriyya, vol.1, (Cairo 1947), p.117.

82. This was always an issue when the Wafd was in power, since each claimed the right to appoint its own creatures; witness the quarrel over the appointment of Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, al-Nahhās' second choice, to the Senate in 1937. The King refused to countenance it, and the matter was only settled when the Ministry was dismissed. Al-Dustūr, 8 March 1938, PPF; Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal, Mudhakkirāt fī al-Siyāsa al-Miṣriyya, Vol.II, pp.54-5.

Copts were well represented in the Senate. Until the mid-1940s, the percentage of seats they held was higher than their probable proportion of the population and, until 1951, was higher than their recorded proportion of the population. They were better represented, at least in numbers, in the Upper Chamber than in the Lower, as can be inferred from the chart below.

Year	Number of Copts	Number of Seats	Percentage of Coptic Seats
1924	11	122	9.1
1930	12[83]	130	9.3
1931	15	100	15.0
1936	14	132	10.6
1939	19	147	13.0
1942	16	147	10.9
1944	15[84]	147	10.2
1946	13	147	8.8
1950	13[85]	147	8.8
1952	12	172[86]	7.0

With two exceptions, no Coptic Senators were returned from the Delta.[87] Copts were elected from heavily Coptic constituences in Cairo, Alexandria and Upper Egypt. More Copts were appointed to the Senate than elected; 57.1 per cent of the total number of Coptic Senators were appointed. Appointments were used to ensure that Copts from all three sects had a voice. The government also used its power to appoint Senators to balance the number of elected Coptic Senators. For example, when five Copts were elected to the 1931 Senate, ten Copts were appointed to ensure adequate representation. Even more

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83. Bishop Lūkās, who is counted here, died in 1930. He was appointed in 1924, and in 1930 drew a ballot to remain in the Senate. Curiously, he was not replaced.
84. This excludes Senator Zakariyā Mihrān who could be either Copt or Muslim.
85. Of the 30 Senators unseated by the Wafd in 1950, four were Copts. Since four of the party's new appointees were also Copts, the Coptic percentage was maintained. Al-Miṣri, 18 June 1950, p.1.
86. The opposition boycotted the August 1950 election designed to fill new Senate seats which were created to compensate for the increase in population.
87. The two exceptions were Minyā al-Qamḥ in al-Sharqiyya and Tūkh in al-Qalyūbiyya. Both districts had few Coptic inhabitants.

useful was the government's ability to use its appointment power to improve overall parliamentary representation. Opponents of minority representation had suggested in 1922 that any weakness in Chamber representation could be made up through Senate appointments.[88] When no Jew was elected to the 1924 Chamber, the government appointed a representative of that community to a seat in the Senate. In 1931, when Coptic representation in the Chamber fell to 2.6 per cent, the Sidqī Cabinet was able to placate Coptic fears, at least to an extent, by boosting Coptic representation in the Senate to 15 per cent. When few Copts were elected to the 1950 Chamber and only three were later elected to the Senate, the Wafd government increased their total number by appointing Copts to Senate seats. However, Coptic representation still fell to its lowest point in the life of the Senate.

The Senate, for most of its life, had a Wafdist majority. Exceptions to this were the 1931-1935 Senate and the 1946-50 Senate when non-Wafdists had a majority.[89] Unlike the Chamber, Coptic representation was not necessarily highest when the Wafd was in power. Coptic representation in Wafd-dominated Chambers generally was adequate and Senate seats were not needed to redress the balance. Coptic representation in the Senate reached peaks in 1931 and 1939, both years with non-Wafdist governments. After 1946 and in accordance with increasing communal tensions, Coptic representation declined. Comparing the first and last parliaments in 1924 and 1952, both houses indicate that the Wafd grew less interested in maintaining a high level of Coptic representation. Before the 1952 Senate election, Misr complained that the Wafd had only seen fit to nominate one Copt;[90] subsequent to this criticism, the Wafd presented three for election.

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88. See al-'Ahrām, 26 May 1922, PPF.
89. In 1946 most Copts in the Senate were non-Wafdists.
90. Misr, 23 March 1951, p.1.

Although the appointment power was used to give all native ethnic groups and some sectional interests like the army a voice, seats were not formally or informally allocated to one or another. When the Syrian Senator Yūsuf Sābā died, a Muslim colleague suggested that his seat be given to a member of his community, but this was defeated and Taha Husain was appointed to the seat.[91] Often when a Copt died or resigned, his seat was consigned to a Muslim. Just as often, when a Muslim resigned his seat early, it was offered to a Copt. Coptic senators came from the same backgrounds as their Muslim counterparts; large landowners, including several who owned more than a thousand feddans, were well represented, as were ex-Cabinet Ministers and high government officials.

The 1923 constitution permitted religious dignitaries to sit in the Senate, and consequently that body had representatives from both the Muslim ʿulamā' and the Coptic clergy. Two Coptic ecclesiastics, one Orthodox and the other Catholic, were appointed to the first Senate. Then in 1931, Sidqī, to the considerable displeasure of Miṣr and the Lay Council, appointed Patriarch Yu'annis to the Senate.[92] Miṣr argued that the Patriarch's position and religious function required him to remain above the political fray;[93] but it really objected out of a fear that his appointment would increase his power. The Patriarch, perhaps due to this pressure, seems to have considered declining the appointment,[94] but ended by accepting it. Senate representation of

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91. Egyptian Gazette, 4 April 1924, p.4.
92. FO.141/758, 92/15/31. There was a precedent for this. Patriarch Cyril had served in both the Legislative Council and the General Assembly in the 1890s.
93. Miṣr, 9 June 1931, p.5; 14 June 1931, p.1.
94. Ibid.

Muslim ʿulamā came to a temporary end and of Coptic clergy to a final end in 1936, when the Wafd refused to name representatives of either to the Senate. While no Coptic complaints seem to have been voiced at the time, Salāma Mūsā proposed in 1950 that a Coptic Metropolitan be appointed to the Senate to be the official representative of the Coptic Church.[95] The Wafd, again in power, did not heed his suggestion. However, the election to that last Senate of al-Minyāwī Pasha, the lay Vice-President of the Majlis Millī, gave some satisfaction to the community.[96]

3. Local Councils

Coptic representation in some local bodies was adequate or more than adequate; in others, it was weak or non-existent. This generally, but not invariably, bore some relation to the number of Coptic inhabitants in an area. Even the predominantly Coptic population of Naqāda, Qinā did not always elect a Copt to their four-man town council. However, even a persistent failure to elect Copts to a given council probably had little effect on the community's welfare given the high degree of government centralization. Little power was delegated and most important decisions were made in Cairo. Provincial and municipal councils had more prerogatives than town and village councils, as might be expected, but even the provincial councils had only executive powers. Town and village councils were transferred at one point from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Public

95. Miṣr, 5 January 1950, p.1.
96. Curiously, Miṣr objected when al-Minyāwī tried to run for election to the Chamber in 1949 and expressed the fear that this would give the Majlis Millī a political colouring. Due to communal pressure, al-Minyāwī withdrew his candidature. He had been nominated by al-Kutla, as he had been in 1946 when he failed to secure a seat in the Senate. In 1951 Misr was pleased with his election. See Misr, 6 December 1949, p.1.

Health, indicating the limited range of their interests. It is difficult to draw any correlation between the number of Copts elected to a council and the party affiliation of the government conducting the election.[97] Coptic representation does not seem to have been significantly better in Wafd-dominated councils. Often a Copt served on a council for a number of years or kept the seat within his family. For example, Jirjis Bey ʿAbd al-Shahīd eventually relinquished his seat on the Bibā, Banī Suwaif town council to his son, Habīb, who in turn passed it on to his brother Munīr.

Copts generally were well represented on the 'Asyūṭ and Jirja provincial councils; these were the only two which always included at least one Copt. Both provinces, of course, had large Coptic populations. 'Asyūṭ officials in 1922 even unseated one of the four Muslims elected to their town council in order that one Copt should be represented.[98] Copts won election to provincial councils in other Upper Egyptian provinces, but with less frequency. Copts never served on the 'Aswān provincial council and seldom did so on the Banī Suwaif and al-Faiyūm councils. More Copts managed to secure election to the Qinā and al-Minyā councils. The only Lower Egyptian provincial councils to include Copts were those of Baḥaira, al-Gharbīyya and al-Minūfīyya in 1939 and 1943. Their election may be the result of Wafd-conducted provincial council elections.[99] Few town and village councils in the Delta included

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97. Attempts to do so are complicated by the fact that, depending on the law then prevailing, only one-half of the members came up for election at any one time. In addition, the provincial council law was changed frequently. Among those items altered were the method of election, the term of office, the qualifications of candidates and the powers exercised.

98. The Coptic community voiced its dismay when it learnt that it had failed to return a Copt. To preserve civil harmony, one of the victors, a Wafdist, stepped down. Tawfīq Dūs raised this example in the Constitutional Commission to support his demand for minority representation. Al-Watan, 27 February 1922, p.3; FO.141/452, 14544/2/22/

Copts, but more in Upper Egypt did so.[100] Copts often did secure election to municipal councils in both regions; these councils, however, were unique in including foreign representation as well.

4. The Quality of Coptic Representation

Because Copts were elected to Parliament to represent not only their constituents, a majority of whom usually were Muslim, but, in a more general sense, the entire country, it is not surprising to find that the level of formal representation on matters of concern to the Coptic community was low. This was particularly true of issues which also interested Muslims and was less so of those specific to the Coptic community, like the Majlis Millī reform of 1927. The latter, despite Palace concern, was not a matter of interest to Muslim voters or most Muslim members of Parliament; therefore, Coptic Senators and Deputies felt free to use this new forum to prosecute an old quarrel. Few Coptic members, however, would have had the courage or foolhardiness to contribute to the annual debate on al-'Azhar's budget. The prudence of Coptic politicians on such points is well illustrated by Taha Hussain's remark that al-'Azhar was never as pampered as when Makram ᶜUbaid was Finance Minister.[101]

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99. Deeb suggests that the Wafd was stronger in the Delta and won proportionately more seats on Lower Egyptian than Upper Egyptian provincial councils. However, this does not help explain why Wafd-dominated Delta provincial councils in previous years contained no Copts. The Wafd would seem to have controlled provincial councils except for a time in the early 1930s and another in the later 1940s. See Marius Deeb, Party Politics in Egypt; the Wafd and its Rivals, 1919-39 (London 1979), p.159.

100. Sometimes Copts were included in these councils by virtue of their occupation; for example, the local sanitation inspector, who was sometimes a Copt, belonged by right.

101. Interview with Louis ᶜAwaḍ, 29 February 1980. When ᶜUbaid was Finance Minister in 1936, he apparently spent so much money on translating the Qur'ān into other languages, building mosques and paying preachers, that a delegation of ᶜulamā came personally to thank him. This gave ᶜUbaid the opportunity to reiterate that he was a Christian in religion and a Muslim in country.

One example of the poor quality of representation can be seen in the issue of Christian religious instruction in state schools, discussed in greater detail later. This was a subject close to the heart of the Coptic community because Islamic religious instruction formed part of the school curriculum. When the Chamber debated in 1933 the compulsory primary education bill, which provided for extensive Islamic religious studies, no Coptic Deputy suggested that Christian education also be provided. One Senator, Dr. ʿAbd Allah Simaika, showed more courage, and at least raised the subject during the Senate debate on the bill.[102] In the Chamber, a motion to provide Christian education was made in the following session but found little Coptic or Muslim support. When a motion was made to increase the amount of Islamic education provided in state schools, no Copts demurred or spoke in favour of an equal amount of Christian education.[103] Often, when Coptic representatives did choose to speak out in defence of their community, they made their argument on technical or legal grounds and not on the actual merits or demerits of the case. For example, in the 1944 Chamber debate on a draft inheritance law and the 1946 Senate debate on personal status jurisdiction, Coptic representatives argued that both bills should be returned to Committee on minor grounds; they said nothing directly against the provisions of either bill.[104]

Coptic senators may have been slightly more willing to represent the Community than Coptic Deputies, as is indicated by ʿAbd Allah Simaika's 1933 attempt in the Senate, and the 1926 proposal of Senator Sūryāl to change the Lay Council Charter. Some appointed senators may have seen themselves as communal representatives. It is

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102. Misr, 3 June 1933, p.3.
103. Chamber Debates, thirty-third session, 7 March 1933. See also Alfred Yallouz, "Chronique legislative, 1932-3", L'Egypte Contemporaine 152 (1934), p.800.
104. Chamber Debates, sixteenth session, 8 March 1944; Senate Debates, twenty-third session, 23 December 1946.

certainly difficult to see the ecclesiastical senators as anything else, although many Copts would have argued that these men represented the clergy and not the community. Bishop Lūkās' outspokenness on the subject of Majlis Millī reform in 1926-27 is a case in point. Otherwise, the clerical senators seemed to keep a low profile and probably were busier with church than Senate duties.

Copts seem to have been conscious of this failure to defend their interests, if only because the Coptic press periodically mentioned it. In 1926 Misr took Murqus Ḥannā, Deputy and Cabinet Minister, to task for not persuading the government to act on the matter of church reform and monastery endowments. However, the paper did go on to praise him for representing the general interests of his constituents.[105]

In 1933 Murqus Simaika complained about Coptic deputies "who never open their mouths when bills of vital importance to the Coptic community....are discussed or when important grants out of public funds are voted in favour of Muslim institutions". He added that it was not only Coptic Deputies who failed to show an interest in communal affairs, but those in the Senate and Cabinet as well.[106] Although Misr noted its pleasure in 1940 when Kāmil Bey 'Ibrāhīm broke the "jealously-guarded silence" of his colleagues and co-religionists to broach the subject of non-Muslim personal status courts, it expressed disappointment that he so quickly abandoned the topic. The paper asked Coptic senators, whom it claimed had said little since their election, to be more vigorous representatives of the community.[107]

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105. Misr, 27 September 1926, p.1.
106. FO.141/755, 124/4/33.
107. Misr, 9 May 1940, p.1.

Traditionally, the higher clergy had constituted the community's political elite, which was entirely dependent on the good will of the government. What this new political system did was to consolidate, if not actually establish, a new Coptic political elite, which looked not to community, church or government for approval, but to the Muslim majority. Had the Copts been concentrated in one region or had minority representation been approved, then Egypt might have seen the rise of communal politicians. Coptic representatives would have been obliged to defend better Coptic interests in Parliament, but a better defence need not have contributed to the overall welfare of the community. The nationalist fear that proportional representation would divide the Egyptian people was not far fetched. It would have set the Copts apart from the national community and Coptic politicians, in competing with one another, could have indulged in verbal extremism, making more and more extravagant and hopeless demands on behalf of their constituents. This would probably have led to physical violence, if only in the form of a Muslim backlash against a community which had forgotten its place. Violence was something the Copts had to contend with anyway, but it probably came later and on a smaller scale than it might have otherwise. Formal parliamentary representation, while not unimportant, was nothing compared to informal influence exercised in party and government circles, particularly when Parliament was not a strong institution and was subject to summary dismissal. This kind of influence Coptic politicians certainly had and it was sometimes used on behalf of their community. Any kind of proportional scheme would have allocated so few seats that their role would have been restricted to the less important formal one. There remained the possibility, too, that percentage of the population could have become a criterion in other

areas; for example, the civil service and state education. This would not have been in the interest of the Copts. Of course, with the great increase in the number of political groups competing in elections toward the end of the monarchy, proportional representation could have given the Copts more power than that provided by the same number of seats in a stable two-party system.

5. Coptic Expectations and Demands

Muhammad Husain Haikal tells the story of a young Coptic lawyer who tried to persuade him of the virtues of minority representation in the wake of the 1924 election.[108] Haikal pointed out to him that under proportional representation, the Copts would have had fewer seats than they had just won.[109] The lawyer declared that he was willing to sacrifice those seats in return for a guarantee of future seats. He believed, with some prescience, that national solidarity would weaken, intercommunal tensions mount and the Copts end up unrepresented in Parliament. While this situation did not specifically come to pass under the monarchy, the Copts, by the mid-1940s, felt that they no longer had an adequate number of representatives. Salāma Mūsā complained repeatedly that the 'Abāẓas, a large and powerful Delta family, had more representatives in Parliament than did the Copts.[110] This concern about the number of representatives was occasioned by a recognition that their constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom

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108. Haikal, Mudhakkirāt, vol.1, pp.160-1.
109. Because of this, in 1930, when the Copts were well represented in Parliament, al-Siyāsa claimed that proportional representation was needed to protect the interests of the majority and not the minority. Al-Siyāsa, 12 February 1930, quoted in al-Bishrī al-Kātib 121 (1971), pp.155-6.
110. Misr, 20 April 1946, p.1; 15 April 1946, p.1.

was not safe from the government or the mob.[111] Mounting hostility toward the Copts persuaded several Copts to call for the disestablishment of Islam as the state religion. At the same time, Copts and Misr began to call for the institutionalization of proportional representation for minorities.[112] Misr was clearly concerned that the Muslim Brethren and others were working toward a theocratic state;[113] as the paper noted, religion had already been introduced into foreign and domestic policy.[114] With the prospect of a British withdrawal in the near future and the problem of an increasingly discredited and fragmented political system, the Copts perhaps saw minority representation as something which would safeguard the community. The irony is that they did not need protection from those who were willing to operate inside the bounds of the political system, but from those who denied its legitimacy and wished to overthrow it.

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111. Misr, March and April 1947, particularly 4 April 1947, p.1.
112. See Misr, 4 April 1947, p.1. Curiously, in the next breath, this article demanded that government employment be equally open to all and not be restricted to a community's proportion of the population. Misr, 11 January 1950, p.1; 12 January 1950, p.1; 18 January 1952, p.1.
113. FO.371/53297, J2253/39/16; Misr 17 April 1948, p.1.
114. Misr objected in part to Egyptian participation in an Islamic conference held in Pakistan. Misr, 11 January 1950, p.1.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COPTS AND PARTY POLITICS

A. The Wafd

The Wafd party placed more Copts in visible positions of influence than did any other party, with the possible exception of Makram ʿUbaid's 1943 splinter group, al-Kutla. The party's concern to promote Coptic political participation derived partly from its self-image as the representative of the entire nation. The Wafd saw itself not as a party representing sectional interests, but as a movement whose wide-ranging support in all sectors of Egyptian society most fitted it to obtain genuine independence and exercise political power. In addition, the egalitarian and secular political beliefs of the party, borrowed from Western thought, could be both demonstrated and reinforced by according a share of that power to minorities. On a more practical level, many Coptic nationalists rose in party circles due to the 1918-23 arrests and exiles, which created a turnover in leadership. Their success in proving their loyalty, ability and courage gained them the respect of their Muslim comrades and attracted a popular following. This, in turn, drew still more Coptic supporters into the Wafdist fold.

In 1923 the Wafd, in preparing for a more orderly political life, appointed a new party Executive Committee of eight Muslims and six Copts. In order of seniority, the latter were Sinūt Ḥannā, George Khayyāṭ, Wāṣif Ghālī, Wīṣā Wāṣif, Makram ʿUbaid and Murqus Ḥannā. A second group of eleven Muslims and three Copts, Salāma Mīkhā'īl, Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr and Rāghib 'Iskandar, was designated to join the

first in plenary sessions.[1] Only Wīsā Wāsif, Murqus Hannā and Sinūt stayed with the Wafd until their deaths in the 1930s. The three in the second group left the party in 1932 and later returned. Khayyāt resigned at roughly the same time. Wāsif Ghālī, seemingly more interested in cultural than political affairs, was inactive between 1932-6 and retired from party life in the late 1930s. The last of the nine, Makram, parted company with the Wafd in 1942. New Copts, however, were periodically appointed to the Executive Committee in an attempt to preserve the special character of the party.

The Wafd was perhaps the only party to devote much attention to local organization. Local notables were useful campaigners; and, in heavily Coptic areas like 'Asyūt and Qinā, many Copts served on Wafdist provincial, district and constituency committees. Sinūt Hannā, who made many a fund-raising tour in the party's early days,[2] was in charge of party organization in 'Asyūt. His colleague, Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, held the same job in his home province of Jirjā. Fakhrī was also, for a time, reponsible for organizing Wafdist provincial tours.[3] Both were two of the most active Wafdist propagandists in the early period.[4]

Several Wafdists had influence in labour affairs. Rāghib 'Iskandar was the only Coptic member of the Chamber's Labour Committee in 1924, and he ran as a workers' candidate in 1925. Along with

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1. The British were surprised at the omission of Sādiq Hinain, who probably played an important role in keeping the party going the first six months of 1923. He was frequently received by King Fu'ād who was then paying court to the Zaghlūlists and who gave Hinain £E3,000 to help start the Wafdist paper al-Balāgh. FO.371/8959, E1031/10/16.
2. Marius Deeb, "The Wafd and its Rivals: The Rise and Development of Political Parties in Egypt 1919-39", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford 1971, p.120.
3. This was after Zaghlūl's return from Paris. Interview with Saʿd Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, 17 May 1979.
4. See Chapter Two; Egyptian Gazette, 6 July 1923, p.4; FO.371/12361, J3215/8/16.

Makram, who also professed a special interest in workers, he was defeated in this election; but this probably had more to do with government interferance than with any inability in the proletariat to identity their interests with those of Makram and Rāghib. Makram and the Copt, ᶜAzīz Mīrhum, served as legal advisers to several unions; and the former, even after breaking with the Wafd, retained some influence with workers. Mīrhum, in conjunction with a Muslim colleague, ran the Egyptian General Union of Workers' Syndicates, a federation of twelve unions with 4,800 members.[5] He was the most active Coptic labour leader in the 1930s and eventually became President of the Wafdist Council Union of Syndicates, founded in 1935, after ousting ᶜAbbās Ḥalīm.[6] Dr. Najīb 'Iskandar, who represented a working-class district in the Chamber and who was arrested at one point for feeding funds to workers suspected of perpetrating anti-government bombings, also had some influence.[7]

ᶜUbaid was very popular with students and youth, an increasingly important political force in the 1930s. He was intimately connected with the paramilitary youth organization, the Blue Shirts.[8] Kāmil Ṣidqī also had ties with this unruly group, which gave the King an excuse to dismiss the Wafd government in 1937.[9]

Wafdist Copts had even more influence among lawyers. A very large proportion of lawyers were Copts, so it is not surprising that

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5. This federation was practically moribund by April 1931. FO.141/763, 506/1/31. 506/2A/31.
6. Marius Deeb, Party Politics in Egypt: The Wafd and its Rivals, 1919-39 (London 1979), pp.264-5.
7. FO.371/15407, J3309/26/16.
8. The British and even al-Naḥḥās looked on Makram as "Director" of the Blue Shirts. In 1936 a Committee of Direction, formed of Kāmil Ṣidqi and two others, was set up with the hope of strengthening al-Naḥḥās/ᶜUbaid control of the organization for the coming anticipated challenge from Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī. FO.141/543, 19/18/36; FO.371/20124, J9095/2/16; FO.371/20098, J1048/2/16.
9. FO.141/543, 19/58/36.

the Copts played an important role in the Egyptian Bar Association, which was often controlled by the Wafd. Murqus Hannā, who was the first Copt to serve as this professional organization's president, was elected five years in a row. Makram, Kāmil Sidqī and a fourth Wafdist Copt, Kāmil Yūsuf Salīb, also served as Bar Association presidents.[10]

Because Egypt's fate lay with those outside Egypt, propaganda missions abroad were an important political weapon. Those Wafdists who were assigned to work on European and American opinion included Wāsif Ghālī, Wīṣā Wāṣif, Makram, Ṣādiq Hinain and Louis Fānūs. Their knowledge of Europe and perhaps even their Christianity was a help in dealing with Westerners. These men, particularly in the 1920s, made numerous trips to Europe to promote the Wafdist cause. Later, their religion was less of an advantage in dealing with the West because it made them suspect in Egyptian eyes.

To the British, many Wafdist Copts were "extremists", a term which denotes mainly the degree of intransigence displayed toward themselves. No doubt Coptic nationalists seemed more extreme in their political views than some of their Muslim colleagues because the British expected to have their support. The British division between "moderates" and "extremists" is retained here not for what it says about the views of Wafdist politicians, but for its usefulness in suggesting alliances within the party. Personal loyalties and enmities often had more to do with political position than devotion to a particular set of aims. Some of those the British labelled "extremist" in 1923 had materialized into "moderates" by 1932.

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10. Salīb Sāmī was the only non-Wafdist Copt to play a prominent role. Don Reid, "The National Bar Association and Egyptian Politics, 1912-54", The International Journal of African Historical Studies VII (1974), pp.608-46.

The British deplored the influence the early extremists, among them Sinūt, Makram, the 'Iskandar brothers, Wīṣā Wāṣif, Murqus Ḥannā and Salāma Mīkhā'īil,[11] had with Zaghlūl. Sinūt was devoted to the latter and was very influential in the party's early days; his zeal was such that the British described him as "unbalanced" rather than "extremist". Makram, whom one party luminary called the most influential of the younger Wafdists,[12] did not meet Zaghlūl until 1921. He quickly became a protegé and was known publicly as "the faithful son of Sa^{c}d"; this relationship was yet another symbol of Muslim-Copt unity. One scholar has suggested that Murqus Ḥannā was, until Zaghlūl's death, one of the five most powerful men in the party. He acquired a considerable reputation for anglophobia as Minister of Public Works in 1924; in consequence, Lord Lloyd, the British High Commissioner, was very unhappy with Ḥannā's appointment to the 1926 Cabinet.[13]

There were Copts in the party who were credited with moderate views by the British. This designation was relative since in British terms the true moderates were the ^{c}Adlists and later the Liberal Constitutionalists. Two such Wafdists were Wāṣif Ghālī and George Khayyāt. Wāṣif's familiarity with Western culture may have done more to endear him to the British than his political views. Wāṣif had a powerful voice in the party and in 1924 successfully persuaded Zaghlūl

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11. Salāma was a close friend of ^{c}Abd al-Raḥman Fahmī, the head of the Wafdist secret terrorist apparatus. When the latter fell out with Zaghlūl, Salāma pleaded his case. Mustafā 'Amīn, al-Kitāb al-Mamnū^{c}: 'Asrār Thawrat 1919, vol.1 (Cairo 1976), p.263.
12. Interview with Rāghib 'Iskander, 'Akhir Sā^{c}a, 2 June 1976, p.16.
13. Curiously, Ḥannā's views were moderate enough to enable him to be considered for a portfolio in the 1922 Tharwat Cabinet. In 1926, al-'Ittiḥād, the Palace newspaper, suggested, possibly for reasons of its own, that Ḥannā sometimes sided with the moderate non-Wafdists. Quoted by the Egyptian Gazette, 27 July 1926, p.4.

against the advice of al-Nahhās and others, not to resign in his quarrel with the Palace over whose right it was to make Senate appointments.[14] In contrast with this, Khayyāt had little influence in the party; his standing may have been critically injured by his brief defection in 1921.

In the first Wafd Cabinet of 1924, Murqus Hannā and Wāsif Ghālī were given portfolios. Ghālī's appointment to Foreign Affairs was perhaps obvious given his familiarity with Europe and the Palace.[15] His advice, according to al-'Ahrām's political editor, was generally taken by the Wafd on diplomatic affairs, but was not routinely sought on domestic matters.[16] Murqus' elevation offers some proof of his influence with Zaghlūl. One contemporary opponent suggested that Murqus was then known only among lawyers,[17] but another source regarded him as "universally respected" and greatly liked by Muslims.[18] Sinūt had seniority and should have had a portfolio, but his zeal probably damned him in both British and Palace eyes. Murqus was a more palatable candidate; he had earned the confidence of his party and appears to have been routinely consulted by Zaghlūl.[19] His influence did not do the career of his new son-in-law, Makram ᶜUbaid, any harm,[20] although the latter was not elevated to Cabinet rank until 1928. In another important appointment, Sādiq Hinain was named Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Unfortunately accusations of favouritism hampered his usefulness to the party. In 1925, he was

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14. Wāsif described the contemplated resignation as a "revolt against the King". Abd al-Khāliq Lāshīn, Saᶜd Zaghlūl wa Dawrahu fi al-Siyāsa al-Misriyya (Cairo 1975), pp.363-5.
15. He had once worked in the Khedival household, an experience relevant to running a Ministry over which the Palace had considerable control.
16. FO.407/199, No.2 (Enclosure 2), Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby to Mr.MacDonald, 18 July 1924.
17. 'Ahmad Shafīq Pasha, Hawliyyāt Misr al-Siyāsiyya, Vol.1 (1924), (Cairo 1926), p.44.
18. FO.407/199, No.2 (Enclosure 2), op.cit.
19. Ibid.
20. Zaghlūl helped arrange Makram's 1923 marriage to Murqus' daughter, for which Makram had to convert to Orthodoxy.

posted to the Egyptian Legation in Madrid as part of an effort to rid the administration of Wafdists, and this effectively ended his political career.

The 1924 Cabinet came to grief over the Sudan and the assassination of the Sirdar. Makram was among those arrested on suspicion of complicity in the assassination. He was not directly implicated, but had delivered several incendiary speeches which had helped establish a climate for murder.[21] He was soon released and his influence, along with that of other party extremists, may have grown at the expense of more moderate Wafdists.[22] By 1927, they were able to make Prime Minister ʿAdlī's position so untenable that he resigned. Zaghlūl was not in good health and was perhaps losing control of his more unruly disciples. King Fu'ād, believing that the Wafd could successfully insist on the appointment of a Wafdist Prime Minister, idly mentioned Wāṣif Ghālī as a candidate.[23] The previous year, the king had seen Murqus Ḥannā as the most acceptable Wafdist for the post on the grounds that a Copt would be more amenable to royal pleasure because he would be both more disliked and more timid than a Muslim.[24] However, all Wafdists, whatever their differences, agreed that Zaghlūl was the only candidate for Prime Minister. The British did not concur, and so Zaghlūl was forced to accept the appointment of Tharwat.

Zaghlūl's death in August 1927 threw the Wafd into a succession crisis which was aggravated by the absence of several Wafdists, including four Copts, from Egypt.[25] Sentimentalists in the party considered

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21. FO.141/501, 13592/57/28.
22. Deeb, The Wafd and its Rivals, p.190.
23. FO.407/204, No.17, Lord Lloyd to Mr. Chamberlain, 21 April 1927.
24. FO.371/11584, J2218/25/16.
25. The four were Ghālī, Sinūṭ, Wīṣā Wāṣif and Salāma Mikhā'īl. The absentees do not seem to have returned to Egypt in time, but may have voted by proxy or cable. 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī believes that they were able to vote from Europe. Interview, 4 June 1980.

leaving Zaghlūl's position vacant in memoriam or appointing Mme. Zaghlūl as a figurehead with real power in the hands of al-Nahhās, Fath 'Allah Barakāt and Wīsā Wāsif.[26] Both were fanciful solutions, and it is unlikely that al-Nahhās and Barakāt would have comprised an amiable partnership. These two, the one as Secretary-General of the party and the other as Zaghlūl's nephew, were the main rivals for Zaghlūl's mantle.

An election was held with surprising speed in September, and al-Nahhās was its victor. Haikal maliciously credits Copts with a special role in the election by pointing to the presence of Makram and Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr in a group which engineered the victory.[27] Saʿd, Fakhrī's son, confirms his father's crucial role, contending that Fakhrī switched his vote from Barakāt to al-Nahhās and persuaded others to do likewise.[28] The British, who, unlike Saʿd but like Haikal, were hoping to discredit the Wafd, also suggested that the Copts played a role in the election.[29]

Fakhrī may or may not have been able to carry the votes of other Wafdists; there were certainly not enough Copts in the Wafd to elect al-Nahhās single-handed.[30] They may well have chosen to support al-Nahhās on his own merits. The latter was from an important Christian centre in the Delta and had been helped early in his career by a Christian notable; he was tolerant and unpredjudiced. In addition

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26. FO.407/205, No.21, Mr. Henderson to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 24 September 1927.
27. Muhammad Ḥusain Haikal, Mudhakkirāt fī al-Siyāsa al-Miṣriyya, vol.1 (Cairo 1951), p.279.
28. Saʿd suggests that his father betrayed Barakāt only after receiving assurances that al-Nahhās was not prejudiced against Copts. The Residency, however, speculated that al-Nuqrāshī had frightened Fakhrī into voting for al-Nahhās. Interview, Saʿd Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, 17 May 1979; FO.407/205 No.21, op.cit.
29. FO.371/12359, J2730/8/16. Leland Bowie accepts Haikal's interpretation that a group of Copts helped tip the balance in favour of al-Nahhās. Leland Bowie, "The Copts, The Wafd and religious issues in Egyptian politics", Muslim World 67 (1977), p.114.
30. Eight out of the 20 voters were Copts and four of these were in Europe.

Wafdist Copts may have known or suspected that Makram, as a very close friend of al-Nahhās, would be made party Secretary-General.

Al-Nuqrāshi, suspected of complicity in several political crimes, and Mme. Zaghlūl probably had more to do with al-Nahhās' victory than either Fakhrī or Makram. The former organized a demonstration in front of the polling place and earnestly reminded voters to cast their ballots for al-Nahhās. His words may have been innocent, but his past political record gave them a threatening ring,[31] which may well have unnerved voters. Mme. Zaghlūl probably played a more important role. Al-Nahhās won her support by his readiness to allow her a say in party matters; a say that Barakāt was unwilling to concede.

Both men had the advantage of rural backgrounds;[32] al-Nahhās, however, was much better educated and had better moral credentials. Barakāt had caused a scandal in 1924 when he had used his position as Minister of Agriculture to get a large part of his large land-holdings worked without cost to him.[33]

The royalist press played a mischievous and not insignificant role by advocating the election of Barakāt. Not even the most respectable Wafdist could have survived branding as a Palace favourite. The Palace here seems to have hoped that al-Nahhās, as party head, would destroy the Wafd more quickly than Barakāt.[34] Afaf Marsot suggests another reason for Nahhas' election: she feels he was nominated by the extremist faction because he was malleable and would do their

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31. FO.371/12359, J2730/8/16.
32. Deeb, The Wafd and its Rivals, p.173.
33. Interview, 'Ibrahim 'Amīn Ghālī, 4 June 1980. He had also lost prestige when he referred the Secretary-General of his Ministry to the Council of Discipline, whose members unanimously acquitted the man. FO.407/206, J615/4/16.
34. FO.371/12359, J2715/8/16.

bidding.[35] However, as the second most important party official after Zaghlūl, he was an obvious candidate. It is true that he was close to a number of the more radical members of the Wafd, but the fact that he sought their advice does not mean that he was dominated by them.

It is equally true, however, that al-Nahḥās was less well equipped than Zaghlūl to balance those of moderate and radical views and bind all to him in personal loyalty. He was also perhaps less interested in doing this. None of the more moderate Wafdists who sat in the Tharwat Cabinet had any influence in the new Wafd. Murqus Ḥannā was past his prime, as was Sinūt.[36] Wāsif Ghālī remained influential, perhaps because he avoided factional squabbles. He replaced the moderate Ḥamid al-Bāsil as head of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Chamber and he was also offered a portfolio in the 1928 Wafd Cabinet.

Real power in the party became concentrated in the hands of al-Nahḥās, Makram, 'Aḥmad Māhir and al-Nuqrāshi;[37] by 1930, the Residency was convinced of their predominance.[38] Other Wafdists who had backed

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35. Afaf Marsot, relying on Barakāt's Memoirs, gives a very different picture of the election when she suggests that Mme. Zaghlūl quarrelled with Barakāt over some petty personal matter, and then was cajoled into supporting al-Nahḥās by flattery. Marsot's bias in favour of Barakāt is strong; neither the British nor Fatima al-Yūsuf share her prejudice. The British thought his character unsavoury and his unpopularity deserved, but they were resigned to his usefulness as a moderating force in the Wafd. Fatima, in addition, suggested that many Wafdists feared his tyrannical nature. See Afaf Marsot, Egypt's Liberal Experiment 1922-36 (Los Angeles 1977), p.105; FO.407/206, No.10, Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 6 January 1928; Fatima al-Yūsuf, Dhikrayāt (Cairo 1976), p.124.
36. Murqus was so inept as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1926 that he was thought to be suffering from "some form of mental collapse". The British were not surprised when he was excluded from the 1928 Cabinet. FO.407/213, J395/395/16.
37. Al-Nuqrāshī seems to have been added to the party executive at the suggestion of Makram. FO.407/205, J2715/8/16/
38. The Residency saw Makram and al-Nuqrāshī as the presiding evil geniuses. FO.407/210, Nos.10 and 22, Sir P. Loraine to Mr. A. Henderson, 4 and 19 January 1930.

al-Nahhas in the succession struggle improved their standing in the party; Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr,[39] Salāma Mīkhā'īl and Rāghib 'Iskandar were, like Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī, added to the Executive in late 1927.

The moderates grew restive at their loss of influence. In 1928 they quarrelled with al-Nahhās over the enactment of a law ensuring freedom of assembly. They wished to drop the plan, fearing that British disapproval would result in a costly ultimatum. The British, in a fine piece of wishful thinking, predicted that the Cabinet would split on this issue and that a new one under Wāsif Ghālī, who sided with the moderates, would be formed. Fu'ād, however, had his heart set on a more tractable Cabinet and therefore insisted to Lord Lloyd that Ghālī was more of an extremist than Makram and was not a satisfactory candidate for Prime Minister.[40]

The al-Nahhās coterie became increasingly impatient with moderate thinking. At the end of 1931, when the exactions of the Sidqī regime forced the Wafd to consider Wafdist-Liberal collaboration, the moderate Barakāt faction urged the acceptance of a Liberal plan for a coalition Cabinet. This Cabinet would conduct elections and its non-Wafdist Prime Minister would remain in office even in the event of a sweeping Wafdist victory. Their opponents found this plan naive; they would have little incentive to share power after their inevitable election victory.

Most members of the Executive, including some who had helped al-Nahhās triumph over Barakāt, favoured collaboration with the Liberals. They included Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr, George Khayyat, Rāghib 'Iskandar and

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39. Neither Henderson, Grafftey-Smith nor Keown-Boyd had a very high opinion of Fakhrī. The latter had gained a reputation for his "venal exploitation" of appointments. See, for example, FO.407/206, No.61 (enclosure). Notes on a visit to Sohag, 11-14 February 1928 by L.G. Grafftey-Smith; FO.141/770, 358/5/31.
40. FO.371/13117, J1378/4/16.

Salāma Mīkhā'īl. They may well have felt that co-operation with the moderate Liberals would strengthen their own position in a party whose leadership had grown less collective. Ranged against them were a group including al-Nahhās, Makram and Sinūt.[41] Barakāt had a majority on the Executive Committee but since his opponents controlled the party treasury and the local Wafdist organizations, he was the one forced to make concessions. Working out the details together, he and Makram abandoned the Liberal plan for a post-election Cabinet and agreed that majority decisions would henceforth be respected by all members of the Executive Committee. Barakāt's faction should have put their money on a better horse; only British insistence could have put a coalition cabinet into office and it soon became clear that the British were not going to co-operate. The moderates had offended al-Nahhās needlessly, and they must have realized that swallowing their pride was less traumatic than trying to survive in opposition to the Wafd and Sidqī.[42]

George Khayyāt, who had been relatively inactive for years, resigned in early 1932 from the Executive. No doubt he disliked the moderate faction's loss of face, but he may have had a more cogent reason for breaking his long association with the party. He was rumoured to be in financial difficulties, and if he hoped for assistance from the Bank of Agricultural Credit, it was unwise to oppose Sidqī.[43] Khayyāt was only the first to go; later in 1932, al-Nahhās, perhaps feeling the advantages of a more homogeneous Executive, expelled the moderate majority from the party. A quarrel between the moderate

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41. Wāṣif Ghālī, perenniallyin Europe, was asked by both sides to return home to mediate. He seems to have stayed put, sensibly avoiding a job which would have earned him the resentment on one side or the other.
42. FO.371/16018, J451/14/16.
43. Ibid. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 4 June 1980.

Najīb al-Gharablī and Makram over a legal case they were jointly defending gave al-Nahhās the opportunity.

Makram, in the middle of his legal presentation, was obliged to absent himself from court for a few days. When he returned, the court refused to allow him to interrupt the lawyer then speaking in order to complete his case. In a fit of pique, he called upon his colleagues to withdraw from the defence with him. Al-Gharablī, believing such an action damaging to the accused, refused to withdraw and chastised Makram for his precipitous behaviour.[44] Al-Nahhās eventually sided with Makram, a decision that was as much due to al-Gharablī's lack of tact as to Makram's greater persuasive talents, and al-Gharablī was expelled from the Wafd.[45] Al-Nahhās next excluded all the moderates, including Rāghib 'Iskandar, Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr and Salāma Mīkhā'īl. Najīb 'Iskandar, who had too handsomely praised al-Gharablī's work for the defence, lost his place on the Cairo Central Committee.[46] Salāma promptly published blistering attacks on Makram in al-Siyāsa, calling him a viper and a shameless liar. Makram responded in a similar vein in Kawkab al-Sharq.[47]

Wāsif Ghālī, alarmed by events but maintaining a safe distance from the maelstrom, wrote to both sides in an attempt to repair the damage and to arrange a reconciliation.[48] One note of his survives; it condemns al-Nahhās' unilateral action as a "coup d'état".[49] The British expected Ghālī to join the expelled,[50] but one cousin believes

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44. FO.141/744, 1167/1 & 2/33; FO.371/16109, J2552/14/16.
45. FO.407/216, No.22, R.I. Campbell to Sir J.Simon, 28 October 1932.
46. Ibid.
47. FO.407/216, No.39 (enclosure). Memorandum Respecting the Egyptian Press, 25 November to 1 December 1932.
48. Interview, 'Ibrahīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 19 March 1979.
49. CAS, File W/22. This note may be the draft of a letter, but it is undated and is not addressed to anyone.
50. FO.407/216, No.36. Sir P. Loraine to Sir J. Simon, 26 November 1932.

that Ghālī disapproved equally of both sides in the dispute.[51] Afaf Marsot suggests that Ghālī remained with the Wafd from a misguided sentimentality.[52] A more plausible explanation, and one which gives him credit for some intelligence, is that he realized how little hope the dissidents had of creating a viable political organization. Ghālī, obviously, was less than delighted with the outcome, and he announced that he was retiring from politics until such a time as the situation should clear. He did not attend party Executive meetings, and in 1935 he ceased to be a member of the Executive. He did, however, resume political activity with the formation of the United Front the following year, and he accepted a portfolio in the 1936 Cabinet.[53]

Eventually, several of the moderates drifted back to the Wafd. The 'Iskandar brothers, Salāma Mīkhā'īl and Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr stood for election in 1936 and were not opposed by their old party. Najīb 'Iskandar and Fakhrī won election; the former again left the Wafd in 1937 and the latter, although never again a member of the Executive, remained a Wafdist until his death. Salāma and Rāghib lost the election. Salāma ran again and lost in 1938; he was appointed to the Senate by a non-Wafdist government in 1939 and died a few months later. Rāghib was compensated for his defeat when the Wafd appointed him to the Senate in 1937.

In the wake of the 1932 schism, twelve Wafdists were added to the Executive Committee. Kāmil Ṣidqī, a lawyer, ex-Senator and prominent member of the Bar, was the only Copt in this group. He was of little consequence in the party until Makram ᶜUbaid's ignominious exit in

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51. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 4 June 1980.
52. Marsot, Egypt's Liberal Experiment, p.149.
53. FO.371/20916, J1989/815/16.

1942.[54] Due to expulsions and deaths, the Wafd Executive in the 1930s included far fewer Copts than it had in the 1920s. However, Makram's considerable influence and popularity[55] compensated in quality for any deficiency in quantity.

At least partly because of the reduction of the number of Copts at high levels in the party, Makram's influence began to stand out and by 1935 was causing problems. Al-Nahhās would hold no important meetings without Makram, and his calendar was increasingly controlled by the latter.[56] Whether Makram attempted to limit the access of certain Wafdists to al-Nahhās or not, it is clear that al-Nuqrāshī and 'Ahmad Māhir, came to resent al-Nahhās' reliance on Makram. As early as 1930, the Residency reported that Makram and al-Nuqrāshī were on terms of armed neutrality while awaiting a future struggle for power.[57]

Makram's influence was not the only sore point. There were policy differences as well. One of these occurred in 1935 over the insistence of Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī that the Wafd demand the immediate restitution of the 1923 constitution. Al-Nahhās and Makram, for once on the cautious side of the fence, thought this too risky but feared to appear irresolute.[58] Makram was further annoyed and blamed the unseen hands of Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī when the party newspaper, al-Jihād, lost two of its best writers to the staff of the journal Rūz al-Yūsuf. The latter's owner had made plans to publish a daily newspaper, and Makram feared that his two rivals would control it.[59] He accordingly

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54. Curiously, Sidqī appears, for some unknown reason, to have been dropped from the Executive in the mid-1930s. He was reappointed to the Committee in 1942.
55. FO.371/15404, J1110/26/16.
56. Al-Yūsuf, Dhikrayāt, pp.131, 164.
57. FO.407/210, J317/3/16.
58. FO.371/19076, J5782/110.16. It is interesting to note that by 1935 the Residency is calling the al-Nahhās faction moderate and al-Nuqrāshī's supporters left-wing.
59. Fatima al-Yūsuf claims that Makram's fear was misplaced. Al-Yūsuf, Dhikrayāt, p.168.

convinced al-Nahhās that the new enterprise would harm al-Jihād, and al-Nahhās compliantly refused to sanction the paper. In retaliation, Rūz al-Yūsuf began attacking the Wafdist-supported Prime Minister, Nasīm Pasha. Both the journal and al-Nuqrāshī appear to have been connected with scurrilous pamphlets attacking Makram and al-Nahhās.[60] The Wafd, pushed too far, renounced its link to Rūz al-Yūsuf; and the journal avenged itself by mounting a vitriolic attack on Makram. In both articles and cartoons, the journal suggested that al-Nahhās listened only to Makram and Makram listened only to the English.[61]

The rivalry between al-Nuqrāshī and Makram grew increasingly acrimonious and friction soon developed between the latter and al-Nuqrāshī's friend, 'Ahmad Māhir. Al-Nahhās was no doubt cognizant of the problem and was reported, probably inaccurately, by the British, to be trying to free himself from Makram's "domination".[62] The British, of course, liked to suggest that Makram had some kind of malign hold over al-Nahhās.

Makram had certain advantages in this struggle. He had considerable influence with the Wafdist press.[63] He was even able to force 'Ahmad Māhir to relinquish his job as political editor of Kawkab al-Sharq in 1936 as a condition for joining the treaty negotiations. Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī moved to get control of the party treasury and the local Wafdist committees, both of which were

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60. One pamphlet called al-Nahhās a camel and Makram his driver. It also suggested that Makram had persuaded al-Nahhās to frequent low dancing places. FO.371/19076, J5699/110/16. It should be noted that al-Nuqrāshī was close to ᶜAbbās al-ᶜAqqād, one of the two writers who left al-Jihād for Rūz al-Yūsuf, and he pleaded on behalf of ᶜAbbās with al-Nahhās. Rūz' later attacks on Makram suggest that al-Nuqrāshī maintained his link with the journal.
61. Rūz al-Yūsuf, 14 October 1935, pp.9, 13, 32; 7 October 1935, p.7.
62. This was in November 1936, FO.141/535, 1/183/36.
63. For example, when Makram suspected 'Ahmad Māhir of collaborating secretly with his brother, Prime Minister ᶜAlī Māhir in 1936, he was able to presuade Kawkab al-Sharq to treat both brothers hostilely. FO.371/20105, J3533/2/16.
64. This is from a Cairo Police report. FO.371/20105, J.3533/1/16.

in Markam's competent hands, but the latter out-manoeuvred them.[64] That July, they lost control of the party's propaganda apparatus; and in 1937 Makram seduced the staff of the new Wafdist daily, al-Misrī.[65] By 1937 the British Embassy believed that al-Nahhās took counsel only with Makram and it predicted, or perhaps merely hoped, that his reliance on a Copt would harm him in the long run.[66]

Makram and al-Nuqrāshī finally quarrelled over a scheme to electrify the Aswan dam;[67] and this was the straw that persuaded al-Nahhās to drop al-Nuqrāshī and three supporters from the Cabinet in August 1937. At least two attempts at reconciliation failed,[68] and on 14 September 1937, al-Nuqrāshī was ejected from the Wafd. Although it is difficult to determine when other Wafdists chose sides, it is known that the practical Wāsif Ghālī maintained strict neutrality all that summer.

In this way, the third major split in the party occurred. Several members left the Wafd; the only important Copt to do so was Najīb 'Iskandar. To compensate for the loss, the Wafd added new members to its Executive, among them two wealthy Coptic landowners, Fahmī Wīsā Bey and Bushrā Hannā Bey. Aside from Makram, they were the only Copts on the Executive, and they could not hope to rival his influence. Bushrā, as the late Sinūt's brother, was greatly respected but was blind and past the prime of life. Fahmī was a nonentity.[69]

The characters of both men suggest that they were added because they would unquestioningly follow al-Nahhās' lead, would not upset

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65. His favours annoyed the previously loyal al-Jihād so much that the paper moved into opposition, even though only for a month. FO.371/22006, J2805/2/16.
66. FO.407/221, No.51, Mr. David Kelly to Mr. Eden, 28 October 1937.
67. Makram refused to submit the contract to competitive bidding. Haikal, Mudhakkirāt vol.2, p.35.
68. FO.371/20885, J3778/20/16.
69. FO.371/20886, J4060/20/16.

Muslim opinion by seeking public exposure and would not threaten Makram's position, either nationally or within the party. There was, in fact, no one in the party at that point who was capable of leaping into the shoes of Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī.

It has been suggested that Makram, believing that al-Nahhās and the Wafd saw his political role as one of communal representation, sought to block the advance of other ambitious Wafdist Copts.[70] Certainly, Makram would not have put such an interpretation on his role in the party. He was always careful to present himself as an Egyptian, rather than a Christian, nationalist; and he must be credited with some success in persuading at least Wafdists, if not his political opponents, of that fact. Certainly he was in no position in the early days of the party to counteract the influence of men like Sinūt, Wīsā Wāsif, Wāsif Ghālī and Murqus Hannā. The prestige and weight these Copts carried within and without the party proves that, at least in the 1920s, there was room for more than one Copt at the top. Most of these men had disappeared from the scene by the early 1930s and, even without a deliberate policy of obstruction on Makram's part, few Copts had the seniority or talent to rival his influence. The latter's main concern seems always to have been with Muslim and not Coptic competition; Muslim rivals were the most capable of weakening his position by playing on his religious background. It is true, however, that with the exception of Wāsif Ghālī, there were no additional Copts in the party who rose to prominence until after Makram's exit.

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70. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīm Ramadān, Tatawwur al-Haraka al-Waṭaniya fī Misr, vol.2, (Cairo 1960), p.259:

It was a favourite tactic of anti-Wafdists, both British and Egyptian, to claim that Makram dominated al-Nahhās,[71] and this is a claim accepted by some scholars.[72] The two men were very close: they were the same generation, they were both lawyers, they had shared exile and they held similar political views. To note a strong bond between the two is not the same thing as suggesting that one had achieved mastery over the other. The characters of the two men complemented one another and made for a powerful political combination. Rumours of al-Nahhās' weakness probably originated in his flashes of temper, which suggested instability, and his unfortunate physical appearance.[73] It is likely that Makram's religion also had something to do with the rumour. Claiming that al-Nahhās, a Muslim, was the slave of Makram, a Copt, was a far more telling blow than the later charge that al-Nahhās was dominated by the Muslim Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn. It seems unlikely that al-Nahhās could have been held in such high regard and affection by Zaghlūl and risen so high in the party had he been nothing more than the stooge and ninny his political opponents claimed. At least three times, he succeeded in persuading a fickle public that he was the real Wafd, while the other, dissenting Wafdists were only schismatics.

By degrees, others emerged to counter Makram's influence. Their work was not co-ordinated and, even as late as a few months before the final dénouement, Makram's power does not seem to have been substantially diminished. Al-Nahhās had begun to consult others in the party: 'Amīn ʿUthmān, Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn, Najīb al-Hilālī and Ṣabrī 'Abu ʿAlam.[74]

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71. This allegation was particularly favoured by the Liberal press and Haikal repeats it in Mudhakkirāt, vol.2, p.263.
72. Afaf Marsot, Egypt's Liberal Experiment, p.203.
73. Al-Nahhās' eyes looked in different directions.
74. Muhammad al-Tābiʿī, Misr min Qabl al-Thawra (Cairo 1978), pp.240-1.

These men were of a younger generation and they were eager for political success. They were too new to leadership to rival Makram's power in the late 1930s, but, by the early 1940s, their position was more solid. Perhaps a greater threat to Makram came from al-Nahḥās' wife. She may have been jealous of Makram's influence with her husband; Makram certainly suspected her of trying to counter it.

It has been argued by more than one individual that al-Nahḥās consciously tried to balance power in the Wafd to prevent a future schism.[75] This is not an unreasonable analysis, and yet al-Nahḥās did little to prevent major defections in 1932 and 1937; in fact, he seemed to encourage them in the interests of party peace and unity. Still, the Wafd in the 1940s was a weaker organization than it had been in the previous two decades, and al-Nahḥās may have realized that the party could not afford another schism. In addition, Makram was too crafty a politician to have made or responded to overtures from the Palace without cause,[76] particularly at a time when the Wafd had just returned to power. Only concern about his political future could have driven him into the arms of such an old and untrustworthy enemy.

The only serious policy dispute between Makram and al-Nahḥās on record before 1942 was one which surfaced in the previous year. The Wafd had, for some time, been waiting for the British to find an excuse to force the King to invite al-Nahḥās to form a Cabinet. The British were prepared to take such action in 1940 but were outsmarted by the Palace and hampered by al-Nahḥās' contraction of cold feet. By the

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75. Salāh al-Shahīd, Dhikrayātī fī ʿAhdain (Cairo 1976), p.40. Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn is quoted as holding a similar opinion, which Ramaḍān accepts, in Ramaḍān, Tatawwur, vol.2, pp.272-3. Mustafa al-Feki also accepts this interpretation in his "Makram Ubayd: A Coptic Leader in the Egyptian National Movement", unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1977, p.159.
76. Sirāj al-Dīn believed that the Palace was the initiator. Ramaḍān, Tatawwur, vol.2, p.265.

summer of 1941, al-Nahhās had grown restive; he asked Lampson to intervene but it was the latter's turn to be unco-operative. Al-Nahhās, in retaliation, flirted with the Palace and made a few sharp anti-British speeches just in case Lampson had overlooked the possibility of a Palace-Wafd alliance. Security reports suggest that al-Nahhās was actually considering such an alliance in the hope that the Palace would act more quickly than the British in allowing the formation of a Wafd government. In contrast, Makram seems to have advocated keeping faith with the more reliable British. He feared that an anti-British campaign, at such a sensitive juncture, would only harm the Wafd;[77] and he knew how much he personally was disliked by the King. On his own authority, Makram may even have ordered Wafdist papers to reduce the number of references they made to the King.[78] Their quarrel lasted into the new year. In January, Makram was so angry that he refused to attend a holiday speech given by al-Nahhās at Zaghlūl's tomb. Kāmil Sidqī tried to mediate;[79] few others were displeased to see Makram and al-Nahhās at odds.

Haikal incorrectly claims that Makram had contacts with the Embassy to arrange the British-Wafdist coup of 4 February 1942.[80] It was too dangerous for senior politicians to be seen frequently at the Embassy; and it eventually cost 'Amīn ʿUthmān, the real emissary in this case, his life. The warrant for which Lampson had been waiting came with the resignation of the Prime Minister, an act which

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77. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 757, 760. Security Reports (Palace) on Meetings of the Wafd, 8 October and 15 October 1941.
78. Two Security Reports confirm this. CCEH, F7/D7, Card 764, Security Reports (Cairo Police), 2 November 1941 and Card 765, Security Reports (Palace) 4 November 1941. However, a third report claims that at least al-Miṣri had received no orders about reducing the news it published about the King. Card 765. Security Reports (Cairo Police) 5 November 1941.
79. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 826-829. Public Security Reports, 21 January 1942.
80. Haikal, Mudhakkirāt, vol.2, p.263.

followed a crisis generated by the Palace over the government's break in relations with Vichy France; and a Wafdist government was imposed on the King.

Despite the fact that Makram's acquisition of two critical portfolios, Finance and Supplies, would seem to indicate a resolution of differences, two Wafdist contemporaries suggest that serious problems began with the first day of the Ministry.[81] 'Amīn ʿUthmān, who had gained the confidence of al-Nahḥās, almost immediately succeeded, with the latter's support, in blocking an attempt by Makram to fire Hassan Rifaʿat, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior. The Embassy suspected that 'Amīn, who had turned down a portfolio for the possibly more useful post of Secretary-General of the Cabinet, was using Rifaʿat to increase his power in the party.[82] Less than two months later, Makram lost another round when he was unable to prevent the appointment of 'Amīn as Auditor-General. This was an office Makram preferred to keep vacant because it undercut his own authority as Minister of Finance.

Differences between al-Nahḥās and Makram soon became public knowledge. Al-Nahḥās suspected Makram of intriguing with the Palace. The latter was known to be having direct contacts with Palace officials in March;[83] and, when Makram accepted an invitation to a Royal Audience, al-Nahḥās was reported to be uneasy.[84] He was also annoyed since he was having some trouble getting the King to receive him. Makram then infuriated al-Nahḥās by publicly praising the King without seeking prior

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81. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥamāmsī, a supporter of Makram, and Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn, an opponent, both think this. Ramaḍān, Tatawwur, vol.2, pp.266-7.
82. FO.371/31567, J649/38/16.
83. FO.371/31569, J1252/38/16 and J1319/38/16.
84. Salāḥ al-Shāhid wrongly claims that al-Nahḥās did not know about the audience with the King until after it took place. He suggests that Makram as Minister, was fulfilling the wishes of the Palace without consulting al-Nahḥās. Salāḥ al-Shāhid, Dhikrayātī, pp.38, 41.

approval; in doing this, he gave sufficient scope to those party members eager to widen the rift.[85] He quarrelled with Mme. al-Nahḥās who was abusing her husband's position for private gain.[86] Playing an infuriatingly righteous politician, he also opposed the accepted practice of promoting Wafdist officials whose loyalty had earned them punishment under previous non-Wafdist governments.[87] Makram made both these issues, as petty as they were, the basis of his campaign against corruption in the party. His ad hominem attacks gave al-Nahḥās so little room to manoeuvre that it seems unlikely that Makram was still jockeying for position within the party. He probably had resolved upon leaving and hoped to take as many party members with him as possible. Al-Nahḥās, on the other hand, could not have been eager to get rid of Makram; he knew only too well that the latter was as formidable an opponent as he was capable an ally.[88]

With the Palace behind him, Makram pushed the dispute to its logical conclusion. Like the Saʿdists before him, he could not hope for political survival alone; only an alliance with the Palace was likely to guarantee his political longevity. In May al-Nahḥās deprived Makram of the Ministry of Supplies which the latter was using as a base from which to mount his campaign against corruption. Makram had already forfeited any support he had in the Cabinet, and some influential Copts pressed him to be more conciliatory.[89]

Finally, on 26 May, the Cabinet was reshuffled and Makram was left out. Kāmil Ṣidqī Pasha, who had been Minister of Commerce, became Finance Minister. Censorship was ordered to prohibit references

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85. Al-Feki, "Makram Ubayd", p.162.
86. Apparently, Mme. al-Nahḥas and Mme. ʿUbayd were not on good terms and this affected their husbands' relationship. FO.371/31570. J1619/38/16.
87. One of these officials was the Copt, Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīḥa.
88. The British commented that, after the exit of al-Nuqrāshī, Makram was the only efficient organizer left in the party. FO.371/31571, J1885/38/16.
89. FO.371/31572. J2415/38/16. Kāmil Ṣidqī was probably one of those Copts urging moderation.

to Makram as Secretary-General of the Wafd, although he nominally retained this position.[90] He was still, of course, a Deputy in the Chamber. Makram took advantage of an ensuing lull to muster support among Wafdists and members of parliament.[91]

Unfortunately for his political future, Makram had picked his time badly. Under martial law, the government was able to prevent any publicity unfavourable to it and the party.[92] It was difficult for Makram to attract attention, let alone popular support. His work in parliament was easier. There he had a legitimate and not unsympathetic forum in which to prosecute his case against al-Nahḥās. Makram had had charge of the selection of most of the Wafdist Deputies and Senators.[93] Some of these men no doubt owed their political career to Makram's patronage, and many Upper Egyptians, Muslim and Copt, were reputed to be well-wishers. Makram, in fact, persuaded the Senate to pass a resolution praising him for past services, although he failed in a similar attempt in the more heavily Wafdist Chamber. There seems to be little doubt that "the faithful son of Saʿd" hoped to establish his title to the name of Wafd by besmirching al-Nahḥās' good name. In popularity, he was second to al-Nahḥas, and even if the assessments made of their talents are only partly correct, he was a good deal more clever.

Makram, eager to carry on the war against concessions and favours, planned to make an interpellation in the Chamber on the subject of

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90. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 940-2, Security Reports, 30 May 1942.
91. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 940-9, Security Reports 30 and 31 May 1942. Among those, including several journalists, reported to be helping Makram were Muṣṭafā 'Amīn, Muḥammad al-Tabaʿī, Qāsim Jūdah, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥamāmṣi and Fikrī 'Abāẓa.
92. In 1943 Makram's followers were still complaining about how difficult it was for them to publish or give speeches. Security Report 2250, 12 October 1943, quoted in Jamāl Salīm, al-Būlīs al-Siyāsī Yaḥkum Miṣr (Cairo 1975) p.169.
93. FO:371/31572, J2564/38/16/

supplies, but strong pressure appears to have prevented him doing so. He also failed in an attempt to take his brother's place on the Chamber's Finance Committee, a position which would have enabled him to direct further attacks against the Wafd.[94] In June, there was a full-dress debate on supplies, during which al-Nahḥās refrained from attacking Makram. He may have feared not only Makram's eloquent tongue, but the evidence that the latter had acquired against his wife and in-laws. Curiously, Makram did not use the opportunity to attack al-Nahḥās;[95] the restraint of both men may suggest that attempts at reconciliation were being made.[96]

It has been suggested that Makram was seduced by the Palace with the promise that he could be Prime Minister if he succeeded in damaging the Wafd sufficiently.[97] It is curious that such an asute politician would have not only believed a promise from such an unreliable source, but accepted that a King, who had relied heavily on religious and anti-Coptic propaganda in the past, could appoint, with impugnity, a Coptic Prime Minister. There had been many Prime Ministers without even a trace of Makram's popularity, but they had all been Muslims. There had even been two Coptic Prime Ministers; but the greater amount of power exercised by the British at that time helped make the appointments possible. Once the Prime Minister had represented the Khedive, and it was acceptable for a Christian to execute the orders of a Muslim superior. After 1923, the office became more powerful. The Prime Minister represented the will of the people and had independent

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94. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 943-9, Security Reports, 31 May 1942.
95. FO.371/32573, J2885/38/16.
96. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 940-9, Security Reports, 30 and 31 May 1942.
97. Both Ramaḍān and al-Feki think that Makram genuinely thought that he could be Prime Minister. Ramaḍān, Tatawwur, vol.2, p.272; al-Feki, "Makram Ubayd", p.163.

executive authority; it was less acceptable for a Christian to exercise such direct power over Muslims. Even had the Palace retained a sterling reputation, it would have had trouble with the appointment of a Coptic Prime Minister. Perhaps Makram, in thinking it feasible, fell prey to the political ideas upon which his party and the Egyptian political system were based.

In June Makram was dismissed as Secretary-General of the party. He and 20 supporters requested a meeting of the Executive to discuss the action, but al-Nahḥās refused. Perhaps Makram felt that he could command a majority in the party Executive. In July Makram and a supporter, Rāghib Ḥannā[98] were ejected from the party. Twenty deputies and senators, about half of whom were Copts, left the Wafd with them.[99]

In attracting ten Copts, Makram succeeded in obtaining the support of only one-quarter of the total number in parliament, most of whom were Wafdists. Some members were probably reluctant to find themselves so soon in opposition, particularly after several years out of power. Those Copts who backed Makram may have done so out of some combination of familial, regional, personal, political and religious ties. Although

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98. Rāghib was his closest ally but was not, as is sometimes reported, his brother-in-law. Rāghib was the brother of Bushrā and Sinut Ḥannā. Makram married into a different Ḥannā family.

99. Ramaḍān lists 17 names, as does al-Feki. Misr lists 19 names, missing one of the names on al-Feki's list. The British records suggest that 21 were expelled with Makram and this probably included Rāghib Ḥannā. The Copts were Charles Bushrā Ḥannā, the nephew of Rāghib; George Makram ʿUbaid, the brother of Makram; Mihanā al-Qummuṣ; Zakī and Najīb Mīkhā'īl Bishāra; Michel Rizq; Dr. Fahmī Sulīmān Sīdhum, Alfred Qasīs and Labīb Gris. None were members of the Wafd Executive. See Ramaḍān, Taṭawwur, vol.2, p.257; Misr, 13 July 1942, p.2; FO.371/31573, J3228/38/16.

Makram's supporters were disproportionately Christian, he attracted many Muslims as well. This fact alone suggests that the schism had nothing to do with religion.[100]

Given strict press censorship, an underground publication was the only way that Makram could be sure of reaching the public. With Palace collusion,[101] Makram had the Black Book, a catalogue of Wafdist corruption, illegally printed and distributed. The book insisted that the quarrel between al-Nahḥās and Makram was due to the latter's refusal to tolerate corruption and not, as al-Nahḥās insisted, an attempt to trim Makram's power.[102] The censorship forbade any mention of the Black Book in the press; in any case, Rūz al-Yūsuf was the only journal to take Makram's part openly.[103]

King Fārūq and Makram hoped that the British would be unable to ignore the volume and seriousness of the charges and would allow the al-Nahḥās Cabinet to be dismissed.[104] However, Lampson, who had gone to so much trouble to put the Wafd in power, was unaccommodating. The charges in the Black Book were dealt with in Parliament, but through an interpellation, which did not permit discussion, rather than a full-dress debate. Makram took three days to present his

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100. It is possible, however, that the heavy use of ethnic propaganda in 1937-38 had an effect on a segment of the Wafd leadership. Some may have been concerned to reduce Makram's visibility not so much out of personal rivalry as a desire to leave the party less open to charges of Coptic domination.
101. Lampson speculated that the Palace, at a minimum encouraged Makram in the enterprise. Al-Ḥamāmṣi claims that Ḥassanain suggested the idea of a petition while Makram recommended its publication. It would seem that the preliminaries were arranged by 'Ismā'īl Ṣidqī and Murād Muḥsin, head of the Royal Daira. Once the King agreed to the project, Hassanain seems to have taken charge of it. See Evans (ed.), The Killearn Diaries, 1934-46 (London 1972), p.250; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥamāmṣi, Hiwār Warā' al-'Awār (Cairo 1976), pp.31-6; FO.371/35525, J2855/2/16.
102. FO.371/35532, J1781/2/16.
103. FO.371/35533, J1951/2/16.
104. FO.371/35536, J2855/2/16.

interpellation and stormed out of the Chamber when he was not allowed to continue. Al-Nahhās answered the charges and won a vote of confidence from the Chamber in May.[105] Two months later, Makram was deprived of his seat; his supporters in Parliament shared his fate. The following year, Makram was arrested and only released in October 1944 when the Wafd government fell.

Some Copts feared that Makram's behaviour would cause a Wafdist backlash against the community. In 1943 Habīb al-Masrī publicly asked al-Nahhās not to confuse the views of a people with those of one individual.[106] Al-Masri need not have worried. The Wafd was eager to retain its traditional Coptic support. As early as July 1942, notice was sent to provincial Wafd committees that the problem was not a sectarian one; the party would keep its faith with the principles of Zaghlūl and would not begin making distinctions on religious grounds.[107] Two Copts, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīha and Kāmil Sidqī, joined Fahmī Wīsā on the Wafd's Executive Committee. Since Bushrā Hannā, Fahmī's colleague, had died, this action put three Copts on the Executive and gave notice that the party was still a union of Muslims and Copts. In addition, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, son of the man who had helped al-Nahhās get a professional start, was portrayed as a protégé of al-Nahhās. Al-Nahhās called on the Coptic bishop in Makram's home town of Qinā in January 1943 and later made a speech reaffirming Copt-Muslim solidarity.[108]

Al-Nahhās lost the good will of some Copts when Makram was defeated in a fixed election for the Presidency of the Bar Association. There were

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105. FO.371/35536, J2855/2/16.
106. Misr, 9 September 1950, p.1.
107. FO.371/31573, J3228/38/16.
108. At the same time, the Palace began competing for a share of this now uncertain Coptic support. Brotherhood and unity were praised, and even Shaikh al-Marāghī made friendly public references to the Copts. FO.371/41317, J1495/14/16. FO.371/35529, J665/2/16.

many Coptic lawyers and a majority of them, as well as of their Muslim colleagues, seem to have supported Makram.[109] The day of Makram's defeat, the Minister of the Interior made a conciliatory but hardly satisfactory speech about the patriotic unity of Muslims and Copts.[110] A few days later, in a speech celebrating the Islamic New Year, al-Nahḥās spoke at great length about the need for religious tolerance and he reminded his audience of Muḥammad's example.[111]

When the British demanded the replacement of the incompetent Kāmil Ṣidqī as Finance Minister, al-Nahḥās demurred. Ṣidqī was the only Copt in the Cabinet, and al-Nahḥās feared that some Copts, and maybe even Ṣidqī himself, would take offence and desert the Wafd. Not until May did al-Nahḥās bow to British pressure and move Ṣidqī to the less consequential State Audit Department.

To compensate for the demotion of one Copt, Fahmī Wīsā was made Minister of Civil Defence, a portfolio which had been abolished in 1942. Neither Fahmī nor Kāmil exercised much influence in the party; their colleague, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, seems to have played a more important role.[112]

From the mid-1940s, ideological concerns seemed partly to occupy the party. Leftist members co-operated with Marxists and trade unionists to form in 1946 the Committee of Workers and Students. This body, which played a disruptive role and helped bring the Wafd to

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109. To secure the election of Makram's opponent, the Wafd government postponed the elections until the day after Christmas making it impossible for Coptic lawyers who had joined their families in the provinces for the holiday to return in time to vote. The following year the Wafd nominated Kāmil Ṣidqī to run against Makram. Ṣidqī won by a considerable majority, but many Copts felt that this election had also been fixed. FO.371/46315, J151/14/16 and J223/14/16.
110. This was at a meeting he attended of the Coptic Benevolent Society. FO.317/41316. J223/14/16.
111. US Department of State Archives, No.883.404/116. Alexander Kirk to the Secretary of State, 31 December 1943.
112. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 4 June 1980.

power in 1950, seems to have involved few Copts.[113] Some Copts were, however, associated with another organization of the party's left wing, the Wafdist Vanguard (al-Talīʿa al-Wafdiyya), and among them were Dr. Riyād Shams and ʿAzīz Mīrhum. Louis ʿAwad, another Copt, was a sympathizer.[114] As a poet and critic, he was particularly influential as someone around whom leftist students in the university could gather.

At the other end of the spectrum, the powerful Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn was cultivating the Palace. He probably numbered at least one Copt, Stafan Basīlī, a relative newcomer to the Wafd, among his supporters. It is more difficult to tell where 'Ibrāhīm Faraj and Kāmil Sidqī stood; their first loyalty was probably to al-Nahhās who was trying to hold the party together but was by 1950 ailing.[115] The only important Copt to join the party in the post-Makram period was Jeffrey Najīb Ghālī who abandoned the Saʿdists in 1946 to become a member of the Wafd Executive.

There is no instrument so fine as to allow an accurate and easy assessment of shifts in support for the Wafd. Consequently it is difficult to determine if there was an immediate and disproportionate decline of Coptic support after Makram's exit. There was, of course, a genuine and steady deterioration in the Wafd's reputation from 1942; the events of 4 February and the Black Book showed al-Nahhās and his cohorts to be flawed characters, and they badly tarnished al-Nahhās' personal aura of incorruptibility. This growing disenchantment with the party which had most strongly backed Coptic participation in politics was bound to affect the community.

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113. Louis ʿAwad believes that few Copts generally were to be found in the party's left wing. Interview, 29 February 1980.
114. Ibid.
115. FO.371/80348, E1016/36/16.

A more serious problem for the Copts was the Wafd's diminished commitment, statements of party leaders to the contrary notwithstanding, to unity and equality. This was on symbolic and practical levels. The sundering of the al-Nahḥās-Makram alliance destroyed a symbol of national unity as potent and meaningful as that of the 1919 crescent and cross flag. No new symbol, or partnership, emerged to take its place. There were fewer Copts in the party, and they had less influence as individuals and as a group after the split. In effect, the Coptic voice in the Wafd was neutralized; and, while the Wafd never formally abandoned its secular principles, Wafdist Copts were unable to counter their party's greater reliance on Muslim religious feeling in the late 1940s.

Possibly no party could have borne the burden of being the party of national unity after 1946. Even had the Wafd not split in 1942, it might have succumbed to the temptation to play with religious sentiment. There certainly was less pressure to resist this temptation after 1942. The Wafd expended so much of its energy on the pursuit of independence and power that it never had the time, or perhaps the inclination, to devote to internal reform and to building solid political institutions. Only this latter focus could ultimately have secured the political integration of the Coptic community, as well as a stable political system which was responsive to the needs of ordinary Egyptians.

From the mid-1940s, a feeling grew that the Copts deserved the attacks made against them.[111] The Wafd, as the organization most capable of calming sectarian hostility, did as little to combat the problem as did the Palace. In 1948, the French Embassy, in noting that no party defended the Copts, added that the Wafd appeared to have

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111. Misr, 17 January 1951, p.1.

forsaken its supraconfessional stand for one of Arabism and "the Islamic idea".[112] Misr repeatedly complained in the early 1950s that the Wafd Cabinet completely ignored the problem of religious fanaticism.[113] The paper made a clear distinction between the Wafd of the 1950s and the Wafd of Zaghlūl; in reporting how few Copts had been nominated by the party in 1949, Misr commented savagely on this "new policy".[114] Many Copts felt that they had been abandoned along with the principles of Sa^{c}d Zaghlūl;[115] Misr criticized the Wafd for confusing religion and nation. Co-operation with the Muslim Brethren did not improve the Wafd's image. Misr repeatedly returned to the days of Zaghlūl as a paradigm for national unity and equality.[116] In 1952 the paper brought up the subject of the Black Book and accused al-Nahḥās of disliking all Copts because he hated Makram.[117]

Misr was now quick to point out the disadvantage of relying on parties which continually acted to erode the political position of the community, in part by decreasing the number of its political representatives.[118] At the same time, those same parties were eroding the political system on which Coptic participation and communal safety depended. The only solution was perhaps to withdraw from a political world in which the principles of Zaghlūl seemed to be increasingly irrelevant.

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112. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 21/2. Situation de la Communauté Copte en Egypte, 24 January 1948.
113. Miṣr, 23 October 1951, p.1.
114. Miṣr, 26 November 1949, p.1.
115. Miṣr did not only criticize the Wafd for introducing Islam into secular matters, but this particular article clearly indicates a new perception of what the Wafd was and what it stood for. Miṣr, 11 January 1950, p.1. See also, Miṣr, 9 September 1950, p.1.
116. When al-Naḥḥās abrogated the treaty and appealed for unity between parties, Miṣr chided him for not also calling for unity between the ethnic groups. Miṣr, 12 November 1951, p.1, and 10 October 1951, p.1.
117. Miṣr, 28 March 1952, p.1, and 1 April 1951, p.1.
118. Miṣr, 26 November 1949, p.1.

B. The Liberal Constitutional Party

This party, with less organization and appeal than the Wafd, was, in the words of one wit, "A General Staff without an army".[119] The Liberals began with certain convictions but were rather half-hearted about expressing them in public;[120] they eventually grew half-hearted about the convictions as well.

The party grew out of the 1921 ʿAdlī-Zaghlūl split; its founders backed the former and saw themselves as sensible moderates combating the alarming extremism of the Zaghlūlists. Four Copts were elected to the party's Executive Committee at its founding in 1922: 'Ilyās ʿAwad; Tawfīq Dūs, who brought his two brothers into the party; Salīb Sāmī; and 'Amīn Khayyāt, a relative of George. 'Abādīr Hakīm, a landowner, and Qalīnī Fahmī also joined the party at its inception but were never members of the Executive. The latter was a Liberal for only a very short time. Kāmil Būlus, an ʿumdah, landowner and former member of both the Wafd Central Committee and the Union Party, was elected to the Liberal Executive in 1926, perhaps as a replacement for Tawfīq Dūs. By 1935, all these men had left the party. The only Copt to play an important role after this date was Shafīq Bey Sīdum 'Ilyās, a former member of the Shaʿb party, who was a Senator and a member of the Liberal Parliamentary Committee from 1938-46. By the latter year, even he had defected to the Wafd.

Although the Copts had good reason for their lack of interest in the party, the main point illustrated by these defections is the weakness of party loyalty. Opportunism explains many shifts in party membership. It certainly accounts for the resignation of Tawfīq Dūs in 1925. Dūs, a Minister in the Liberal-Unionist Government of 1925, came

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119. Cab.24/204, CP.181 (1929). Memorandum on Egypt.
120. FO.407/198, Enclosure in No.48. General Situation Report, 9-22 January 1924.

increasingly under Palace influence and was unhappy when his party insisted he resign, with other Liberal Ministers, over the Shaikh ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Rāziq affair.[121] This coalition had never been an easy one and, once before, Dūs had managed to preserve it when the other three Liberal Ministers threatened to resign over the Unionist abuse of government machinery for party ends. He persuaded his colleagues that the Liberals would lose the next election if they had to compete against the Wafd without government help.[122] His arguments in September were less convincing than they had been the previous July; and he, with other Liberals, was obliged to resign from the Cabinet.

Not long after this, Dūs submitted a conditional resignation from the party.[123] His act was at least partly motivated by growing ties with the Palace. Given the Liberals' general lack of success at the polls, Dūs may have felt that his political future could best be secured with royal backing. However, he seems to have maintained contacts with Liberals, perhaps out of a reluctance to burn his bridges too soon. Both he and Salīb Sāmī were reported in 1926 to be opposing Liberal co-operation with the Wafd. Dūs finally broke with the Liberals when a Wafd-Liberal coalition was established and Zaghlūl adamantly refused to grant Dūs a constituency for the upcoming Chamber election.[124] Dūs ran as an Independent but with Palace and government backing. He

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121. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Fahmī, the Liberal Minister of Justice, had been dismissed because he did not want to expel the Shaikh, who had Liberal connections, from the Judiciary when the latter published his controversial book on the Caliphate. Ṣidqī followed Fahmī out of the Cabinet, and the party voted in favour of the resignation of the two remaining Liberal Ministers. The British did not want the coalition to collapse, and Dūs had actually been in touch with them over the matter. FO.407/201, No.33, Mr. Henderson to Mr. Austen Chamberlain, 12 September 1925; Haikal, Mudhakkirāt, vol.1, pp.235-6, 241.
122. FO.407/202, No.17, Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 9 April 1926.
123. The reason he gave was al-Siyāsa's hostility to the 'Ittiḥādists. FO.407/201, No.35. Henderson to Chamber, 19 September 1925; Miṣr 21 September 1925, p.2; Haikal, Mudhakirrāt, vol.1, p.242.
124. FO.407/202, No.17. Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 9 April 1926.

won but was almost immediately obliged to resign his seat due to striking election irregularities.

In a similar case, Salīb Sāmī, a gifted lawyer, resigned from the party in 1933 because he wished to accept a portfolio in the Sidqī Cabinet, which his party was opposing. Sāmī, who was rumoured to owe his career to Liberal leader Muḥammad Maḥmūd's patronage, had been an important party member.[125]

Other Coptic notables drifted away from the party at different times and for different reasons. The Liberals' persistent use of anti-Coptic propaganda could not have encouraged old Coptic members to stay and new ones to join. In the wake of al-Siyāsa's 1929 assault on the Copts for their alleged opposition to the treaty, Miṣr asked how any Copts could consider themselves members of such a despicable party. At least one Copt agreed with Miṣr; 'Abādīr Ḥakīm resigned from the party in February 1930 because of al-Siyāsa's anti-Coptic bias. Predictably, al-Siyāsa seems to have accused him of putting minority interests before national ones. Ḥakīm may have been putting personal interests first as well; he went over to the the then reigning Wafd.[127]

The Liberal party began its political career with good and honourable intentions toward Egyptian minorities, as the number of Copts and even the one Jew who became party "Generals" indicates. However, few Christians hastened to fill out the ranks; Wafdist ideas and political behaviour were better known and more attractive. In addition, the Liberal press indulged in anti-Coptic statements as early as 1923. This may have caused many Copts to think twice, as did the punishing

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125. FO.371/20916, J1989/815/16.
126. Miṣr, 13 September 1929, p.1. This is discussed in Chapter Two.
127. See Ḥakīm's articles in Miṣr, 10 March 1930, p.1, and 20 February 1930, p.4.

Liberal defeat at the polls in 1923. Very few Copts stood for election on the Liberal ticket in 1925, but perhaps the Liberals by then resented the fact that they had so little Coptic support. The 1923 defection of Qalīnī Fahmī and the 1925-26 loss of the Dūs brothers meant that within the party there were fewer influential Copts who could argue against the tactic of linking the Copts with the Wafd in order to discredit the latter. Kāmil Būlus Bey may have been the last Coptic member of the Executive. He still sat on the committee in 1931 but died shortly thereafter. By the mid-1930s, no Copts were represented on the Executive. In the 1938 and 1945 elections, not one victorious Liberal was a Copt. This does not mean that no Copts stood as Liberals[128] but this is a likely conclusion since the coalitions winning the elections apportioned constituencies to reduce competition before the election. It may, of course, mean that no Coptic Liberal had a high enough standing within the party to demand a safe seat. In the 1950 election however, there were no Coptic Liberal candidates. The party of Liberalism and constitutionalism had become the party of Muslims.

C. The Palace

The Palace played such a critical and indeed even damaging role in Egyptian politics that it merits inclusion in a section devoted to party politics. The royal family, proud of its Turkish ancestry, disdained, if not despised their Egyptian subjects. The inner circle of royal advisers were mainly Turkic in origin; few Christians worked in the

128. Curiously, al-Siyāsa in these two years published a list of all the candidates without denoting Liberal candidates.

Palace with the one exception of the European Administration, where Christian language skills were useful.[129]

There were Coptic politicans who sought their political fortune in conjunction with the Palace. This was less out of a belief in the institution of monarchy than it was out of devotion to personal interests. While the Wafd and the Liberals can at least claim to have had certain principles, it is difficult to find any principles to which the Palace and its allies were attached, beyond the advancement of their own power. Those Coptic politicians who sheltered under the wing of the Palace had little popular appeal; few seem to have been involved in the nationalist movement between 1918 and 1922. They came from different family circumstances; some were descended from great landowning families and others, who came to politics via a professional education, were from more modest backgrounds. In 1925 a number of Copts, mainly wealthy landowners like Amīn Ghālī, brother of the late Prime Minister Buṭrus; Būlus Ḥannā Pasha, an elected Senator who probably had just resigned from the Wafd Parliamentary Committee;[130] Kāmil Būlus Bey, who in the space of a few short years belonged to the Wafd, 'Ittiḥād and Liberal parties; and Sarūfīm Mīnā ʿUbaid, an ex-Wafdist, joined the Palace-sponsored al-'Ittiḥād party.

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129. One Copt who did gain influence with King Fārūq, particularly at the end of his reign, was the businessman, 'Ilyās Pasha 'Andrāwus. A member of the boards of directors of several companies, he had an unsavoury reputation and was well placed to advise the Palace on its own unsavoury financial dealings. 'Ilyās' influence seem to have extended beyond business matters to other more critical areas. Ḥassan Pasha Yūsuf, head of the Royal Diwan just before the end of the monarchy, suggests that 'Ilyās interfered in practically all Palace concerns. Yūsuf believes that Ilyās' reputation for corruption was richly deserved. Interview, Ḥassan Yūsuf, 8 November 1978. Another Copt who had influence with the Palace was ʿAdlī 'Andrāwus Bishāra, the son of a wealthy landowner.

130. In early 1925, a number of members of the Wafd Parliamentary Committee resigned on the grounds that the Wafd was insufficiently loyal to the throne. Many then joined al-'Ittiḥād. 'Aḥmad Shafīq accused the British press and some English papers of trying to create a rift between the Wafd and the Palace. See his Ḥawliyyāt, vol.2(1925), pp.2-20.

'Ibrāhīm Ghālī suggests that his father, 'Amīn, and other landowners joined the party because they were in financial difficulties and they thought membership in a Palace-backed organization would help. 'Amīn and Būlus Ḥannā were members of the party Executive. Kāmil Bey Būlus was a member of the Qīnā Committee, of which Būlus Ḥannā was President. Sarūfīm belonged to the Minyā Markaz (District) Committee.[131] A few Coptic ʿumdahs and merchants joined the party as well. Nakhla al-Mutīʿī, whom the British respected, belonged to the party and was occasionally offered a Cabinet post as well.

More Copts leapt on the bandwagon and joined a Palace-approved, if not sponsored, venture in 1930. This was Prime Minister 'Ismāʿīl Sidqī's misnamed al-Shaʿb, or People's Party. Some who joined, like two members of the Wīsā family, were landowners and relatively inactive politically; again, they probably joined because they hoped for financial benefit. Other members, like the three Dūs brothers and Qalīnī Fahmī, were both more active and influential with the Palace. The lawyer Salīb Sāmī joined al-Shaʿb when he was offered a portfolio in the Sidqī Cabinet. Cabinet.[132] At the local level, there were Copts on the provincial committees of the more heavily Christian provinces; for example, one-half of the members of the 'Asyūṭ Committee were Copts.

The party outlived the Sidqī regime but after the Prime Minister's fall in 1933, it was scarcely a credible political force. Sidqī lost control of the party and eventually it was merged with al-'Ittiḥād. At no point did al-Shaʿb have any popular support. It was an artificial creation designed to brighten the democratic image of a basically repressive regime.

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131. See al-'Ittiḥād, 29 January 1925, p.4, and 4 October 1925, p.5.
132. Sāmī remained a party member when he served in the Cabinet of Ṣidqi's successor, ʿAbd al-Faṭah Yahyā Pasha. Sāmī was reported to be the only Minister who had the confidence of Yahyā. FO.371/20916, 1989/815/16.

There were two Copts in particular who were close to the Palace: Qalīnī Fahmī and Tawfīq Dūs. The influence of the former, once considerable, began to decline before Fu'ād's death, in part due to Fahmī's advanced age and deteriorating mental ability.[133] In addition, Patriarch Yu'ānnis had come to rely on Tawfīq Dūs. Fahmī had once been his closest lay adviser and had served as an intermediary between Patriarch and Palace; by 1930, Dūs had usurped his role.

Dūs had a more chequered career and was perhaps most influential between 1925 and 1933. He was close to Ṣidqī and, during the latter's years as Prime Minister in the 1930s, he may also have been closer to the King than any other member of the Cabinet.[134] He was also Ṣidqī's main support in the Cabinet.[135] By 1933, however, the Palace was so embarrassed by charges of corruption against Dūs and saw these as so threatening to an already weak government, that it pressed Ṣidqī to drop Dūs from the Cabinet.[136] Relations between Dūs and Ṣidqī remained good despite this and, after the latter's eclipse, Dūs left Palace-sponsored attacks on Ṣidqī to his brother, Wahīb.[137]

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133. By 1929, the British reported that he no longer enjoyed great political influence. FO.141/686, 8609/55/29.
134. FO.407/213, J395/395/16.
135. FO.407/216, J3362/14/16.
136. In 1932 there were charges of corruption made against Ṣidqī and Dūs. Partly because of the frequency of these charges, two other members of the Cabinet were on such bad terms with both men that they were threatening to resign (FO.407/216, J3392/14/16; FO.141/650, 392/7/30). Ṣidqī suggested Dūs for the US Legation, but given the likelihood of an unenthusiastic welcome by the Americans, Dūs decided to remain a Deputy (FO.371/20916, J1989/815/16). In any case, Dūs' primary interest seems to have been in making money; politics was just another means of acquisition.
137. In this way, Dūs managed to satisfy royal pleasure without sacrificing Sidqī's friendship. FO.371/20916, J1989/815/16.

King Fārūq's reliance on religious feeling and his pose as a devout monarch, probably made him more unwilling than Fu'ād to be seen working in close collaboration with certain Coptic politicians. He was, in any case, not terribly open to outside influence at the beginning of his reign due to the ascendance of ᶜAlī Māhir and Shaikh al-Marāghī. Dūs was persona non grata for some time, but was sufficiently returned to favour in 1942 to be named to the Senate.[138] He may later have lost that favour with the Palace[139] because his appointment was cancelled in 1944.

Dūs' brother, Wahīb, was also close to the Palace but was without Tawfīq's influence. He was a great friend of ᶜAlī Māhir and was even persuaded by the latter to make contributions to Miṣr al-Fatāt.[140] He was also to be found lecturing to the Young Men's Muslim Association.[141] These were connections that few Copts would have found appropriate.

There were other Copts who were associated at times with the Palace. Unlike the Dūs brothers, these tended, like Ṣalīb Sāmī,[142] Nakhla al-Muṭiᶜī and possibly Saba Habashi,[143] to be conscientious and respected functionaries who were useful as token Copts in Palace-dominated Cabinets.

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138. The Prime Minister al-Naḥḥās did not want to repeat his 1937 battle with the Palace over Senate appointments. He objected to some of the names proposed by the Palace but settled on a compromise list which included Dūs. FO.371/31571, J1926/38/16.
139. Interview, Ḥassan Pasha Yūsuf, 8 November 1978.
140. WO.208/1560. Middle East Information Centre Summary. Report 431, 6 February 1941.
141. DW. ḤBM(QM): Security Report 4491, 20 November 1940.
142. His 1925 campaign experience was so shattering that he never ran for election again. He had a good reputation as a jurist although Mack in the Foreign Office did not think much of his ability. Ṣalīb Sāmī, Dhikrayyāt Siyāsiyya 1891-1952 (Cairo 1952), pp.142-4; FO.371/17009, J1851/25/16.
143. The British may have used him as an intermediary with ᶜAlī Māhir in 1941. CCEH, F7/D7, Card 801, Public Security Report, 22 December 1941. Once a Saᶜdist, he became, at some point, an "Independent". He served in the Ṣidqi Cabinet in 1946 and was, during that time, appointed to the Senate. He resigned his portfolio in October 1946 because he did not want to be connected with the unsavoury Ṣidqi any more. FO.371/53313, J1478/39/16.

D. The Saʿdist Party

Only one important Copt, Najīb 'Iskandar, left the Wafd with Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī to form this party named after Saʿd Zaghlūl; none the less, Copts were well represented in the party. This is somewhat surprising given the party's predilection for anti-Coptic propaganda, as demonstrated particularly in the 1938 election campaign, but it may be related to the Saʿdists' primarily urban base. 'Iskandar may have joined because he had finally realized that, after his 1932 defection, he was unlikely to be trusted with any important position in the Wafd. He was able to play an influential role in the new party and sat in various Cabinets which included Saʿdist participation. Another defector to the Saʿdists was ʿAzir Jibrān, Deputy for Bāqūr, 'Asyūt.[144] ʿAzīz Mishriqī, a young lawyer related by marriage to Najīb, was more influential; he was considered but rejected for a portfolio in 1946 and finally became Vice-President of the Chamber. Sābā Habashī also joined, and was elected in 1938 to represent Heliopolis in the Chamber.[145] Jeffrey Ghālī, who was a personal friend of al-Nuqrāshī, also belonged to the party and gave generously to its treasury. He resigned in 1946 over the draft Anglo-Egyptian treaty which he believed demeaned Egypt. His His second cousin suggests that he felt his political ambitions would be better served by the Wafd.[146]

It is interesting that most of those Copts who won election to the Chamber in 1938 stood as Saʿdists. The party improved its record in 1945 and 1950 elections by nominating more Copts than in 1938. At

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144. Miṣr, 12 January 1938, p.1.
145. See footnote 143.
146. 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī thinks that Jeffrey resigned because he wanted to be made a Cabinet Minister. Interview, 4 June 1980.

least half those Copts represented urban constituences. Had the party preached what it practised, it might have won the support of many more Copts; but this probably would not have been an advantage to a splinter group struggling to establish itself as a credible political force.

E. The Wafdist Bloc (al-Kutla al-Wafdiyya)

Soon after breaking with al-Nahhās, Makram founded his own political vehicle, the Wafdist Bloc. Its better known members seemed mainly to come from middle-class families in Upper Egypt; many were fairly young and none had strong links with the Wafd in the formative 1918-22 period. Most were relatively unknown, although some of al-Kutla's Copts were familiar to the community through their participation in various communal organizations. Unlike the other parties, al-Kutla was blessed with an absence of internal dissension, partly because of Makram's strength and partly because, as the American Ambassador pointed out, there were not enough members "to work up a good fight".[147]

Al-Kutla was not an overnight or even an eventual success. Until late 1944, the Wafd Ministry was able to neutralize its activity. With both censorship and martial law in effect, there was little political freedom for those not backing the Wafd. The new party found it very difficult to place its rival claim to the Zaghlūlist legacy before the public's eye. Perhaps Makram miscalculated and saw his popularity as something that grew out of public perceptions of his talents and character rather than something that was due, at least in part, to his connection with Zaghlūl, the Wafd and even al-Nahhās.

147. US Department of State Archives, No.883.00. Ambassador Jefferson Caffery to the Secretary of State, 10 November 1949.

Particularly in the party's early years, Makram was the most ferociously anti-Wafdist of any politician.[148] That a party whose platform was largely restricted to complaints about Wafdist misdeeds could survive two-and-a-half years of Wafd government is something of a tribute to the talents of Makram.[149] Al-Kutla was only briefly a credible political force and that was due to the events of 1942-44 as well as to strong Palace backing. In the long run, however, the party's tie to the King only reflected discredit upon it.[150] A party newspaper was not published until 1944 and its collapse in 1949 signalled the virtual end of the party.

In an attempt to attract public attention, Makram adopted a more exaggerated anti-British stance than he had for some years.[151] The American Ambassador suggested that his views were more nationalist and anti-British than even those of the Wafd.[152] These views gave him something in common with the Muslim Brethren and he, like other politicians, courted them in particular and the religious sentiment which made them popular in general. He complained that the Wafd maltreated al-'Azhar and the Brethren; he mentioned in the Black Book, for example, that the Wafdist government had closed some of the Muslim Brethren's branches.[153] The Black Book was also careful to record the special favours the government had granted to certain Coptic officials.

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148. Haikal, Mudhakkirāt, vol.2, p.276; FO.371/41328, J1731/31/16; FO.371/4137. J1694/14/16; Evans (ed.), The Killearn Diaries. 1934-46, p.255.
149. Lampson felt that Makram was "too passionate and vindictive for wise leadership", and apparently many opposition elements felt Makram's violent tactics were not helping their cause. FO.371/35529, J812/2/16.
150. As Louis ʿAwad commented, it was one thing to attack the Wafd but quite another to become a "stooge" at the Palace. Interview. 19 February 1980.
151. This was evident as early as July 1942. FO.371/31573, J3301/28/16.
152. US Department of State Archives, No.883.00. Ambassador Jefferson Caffrey to the Secretary of State, 10 November 1949.
153. Al-Feki, "Makram Ubayd", p.216.

In the autumn of 1942, it was rumoured that Makram was meeting with Hassan al-Bannā', the Brethren's Supreme Guide. Upon learning that al-Nahhās planned to ban Brethren meetings in Cairo in retaliation, al-Bannā' publicly denied that any meetings with Makram had taken place.[154] With the publication of the Black Book in 1943, the Wafd government, needing another ally, eased its pressure on the Brethren, and may have considered using the Brethren to intimidate Makram's Coptic supporters.[155] In later years, the Brethren would not need any encouragement to intimidate Copts. It is not clear that Makram's conciliatory attitude toward the Brethren was ever productive. When he tried to use the Brethren to ensure a good reception on a visit to Tantā in 1944, it backfired and he was loudly booed.[156] In 1947, Makram was again meeting with al-Bannā'. The following year, he was the only politician to condemn the dissolution of the Brethren organization;[157] similarly, he was the only one to defy a government order and attend the funeral when al-Bannā' was assassinated.

However much Makram may have disliked the fact, his religion and the number of Copts in the party at its founding gave al-Kutla an immediate claim on the attention of the Coptic community. He did not attempt to fix that claim by representing communal interests both because he considered himself a national politician and because he realized that Muslim support was vital to his success. If anything, Makram paid less attention to sectarian problems than many of his colleagues. He may,

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154. FO.141/838, 305/27/42.
155. FO.371/41329, J1880/31/16.
156. It is not clear who was doing the booing. FO.371/41335, J4164/31/16.
157. 'Akhir Sā'a wrote that al-Bannā' must think that Makram had become the last Muslim Brother. Quoted in Richard Mitchell, The Society of Muslim Brothers (London 1969), p.66.

however, have worked both sides of the street and ordered Coptic party workers to explain to Copts that it was in their interest to back al-Kutla.[158] In 1944 it was rumoured that Coptic party workers were using communal and religious tensions to attract followers.[159]

The fall of the Wafd government in 1944 and the organization of a coalition government, including four Ministers from al-Kutla, gave the party its first real freedom to organize. In October, the party gained the support of ten Deputies and Senators who defected from the Wafd when they realized that their party was due for a long stretch in the political cold.[160]

In the summer of 1942, Makram had begun talks with the Liberals and Saʿdists; both, like him, were opposed to the Wafd and in some measure dependent on the Palace. They were not natural allies and only considerable pressure from the Palace forced their co-operation.[161] The personal antipathy between Makram and al-Nuqrāshī would soon have destroyed the 1944 coalition government without this countervailing pressure. Some Copts feared that December that this enmity and Makram's troublesomeness could have unpleasant repercussions for the community.[162] Makram was not only being unnecessarily critical of the Wafd but he was creating many problems for his Prime Minister, 'Aḥmad Māhir. Prince Muḥammad ʿAlī and Embassy personnel speculated that Makram and the Palace would, after thoroughly discrediting the Wafd, sabotage the present government and install a more subservient Palace

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158. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 954-7. Security Report, 15 August 1942.
159. FO.371/41331, J3065/31/16.
160. This list included at least three Copts: Albert George Khayyāṭ, Dr. Ramzī Jirjis and Dr. 'Iskandar Fahmī Jirjāwī. The three were Deputies.
161. One first fruit of their co-operation was an attack on al-Naḥḥās delivered in a joint letter to King Fārūq that November. CCEH, F7/D7, Cards 954-7. Security Report, 18 August 1942.
162. FO.371/45916, J76/3/16.

Ministry.[163] Perhaps Makram saw this as his chance to be Prime Minister.

The coalition quarrelled over the distribution of constituencies for the 1944 election. Makram wanted fewer seats left to open competition because he correctly calculated that, with Saʿdists as Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Saʿdists would win free constituencies. The Palace pressed 'Ahmad Māhir to agree to Makram's demand because it did not want the Saʿdists so strong that it reduced their dependency on the Palace. However, when 'Ahmad Māhir threatened to resign if he could not have his way, the Palace relented. Makram then threatened to resign unless the Saʿdist party disowned all Saʿdist candidates standing in constituencies earmarked for al-Kutla and stopped appointing Saʿdist village chiefs in al-Kutla constituencies. Māhir was tempted to let Makram resign, but his supporters dissuaded him because they were worried about Makram's considerable support among workers.[164] The Saʿdists were popular primarily in urban areas so it was important that the coalition not lose that support. While Makram was working out the details of a compromise, workers demonstrated in front of ʿĀbdīn Palace and threatened a general strike if Makram resigned. King Fārūq was moved to send Hassan Pasha Yūsuf, a Palace lackey, to urge Makram to settle his differences with the Prime Minister.[165]

Makram was right to be concerned for al-Kutla did even less well in the elections than he expected. The party was allocated 55 safe seats by the coalition, but it presented a total of 83 candidates. Fourteen of these, or 17 per cent, were Copts.[166] The party won only

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163. FO.371/41335, J4013/31/16; J4052/31/16; J4154/31/16.
164. FO.371/41335, J4516/31/16.
165. Ibid.
166. Al-Kutla, 4 December 1944, p.3.

20 seats, due to government interference on behalf of Saʿdist candidates and because many so-called "Independents" standing in al-Kutla constituencies were actually Saʿdists. There was talk of excluding al-Kutla from the Cabinet and Makram tried to resign, but the Palace refused to allow it. Al-Nuqrāshī became Prime Minister in February 1945 when 'Ahmad Māhir was assassinated, and relations between him and Makram steadily deteriorated throughout 1945. At one point, the Palace patched things over but, by autumn, Makram was complicating the Anglo-Egyptian treaty revision for al-Nuqrāshī by insisting on formal negotiations rather than the useful prelude of informal talks. Makram seems to have feared being left out of informal discussions. When Rāghib Hannā, a passive politician loyal to Makram,[167] died in November, Makram feared that al-Nuqrāshī would give Hannā's portfolio to a Saʿdist. However, it turned out that Rāghib, a Minister of State, was not replaced. This weakened Makram, without giving him too much cause to complain. Finally, in February 1946, Makram resigned on the grounds that al-Nuqrāshī was not sharing information about the progress being made toward a revision of the treaty. He also outspokenly objected to the severe treatment the government had meted out to student demonstrators. This brought down the Cabinet and 'Ismāʿīl Sidqī became Prime Minister.

Although Makram would never again occupy a Cabinet position, he was invited to join Sidqī's team to negotiate a new treaty. Acting in character, he was reported to be the most intransigent and difficult member of the team.[168] Although the British remarked on his hostility,

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167. He had been in poor health and virtual retirement from the time he joined the Māhir Cabinet in October 1944. US Department of State Archives, No.883.002, Mr. Lyon to the Secretary of State, 28 November 1945.
168. For example, while Sidqī was willing to leave the matter of the Sudan until after the treaty had been signed, Makram insisted that it be settled in the treaty. FO.371/53312, J4138/39/16; FO.371/62993. J4516/3/16; FO.371/53313, J4161/39/16.

it was not really noteworthy; Makram was playing to an audience that had itself become increasingly anti-British. One rather concise description suggests that Makram's political tactics of the time involved "flattery of the Palace, resounding patriotic speeches, bitter attacks on the Wafd, appeals to the Coptic minority for support....and declarations of friendship toward the reactionary Muslim Brethren".[169] This is an odd combination, and must have seemed so to the public. While Makram continued to attack the Wafd, from the summer of 1946, his blows were aimed increasingly at the government and negotiations with the British.[170] He was very argumentative in the Chamber and was complaining indiscriminately.[171] In January 1947 he engaged in fisticuffs in the Chamber with a government deputy. By that autumn, he had turned on his former sponsor, the Palace. The latter was eager to obtain a treaty and had probably come to find Makram an obstacle in obtaining one.[172]

In 1946, perhaps sensing that he had antagonized many potential allies, Makram made a curious approach to the Wafd. Both parties were in opposition to the government and their newspapers, for a time, stopped attacking one another. It was rumoured that Fu'ād Sirāj al-Dīn was trying to work out the details of a reconciliation.[173] This failed and Makram made another approach in 1947, when the post of party Secretary-General fell vacant. Understandably, al-Nahḥās was not willing to overlook the years of betrayal.[174] Makram again tried to

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169. This summary was given at the conference of communist parties of the British Empire in 1947. FO.371/62993, J4516/13/16.
170. Ibid.
171. FO.371/62990, J722/13/16.
172. FO.371/16302, J5178/79/16.
173. It seems unlikely that Sirāj al-Dīn was behind the contacts. FO.371/53332, J5430/57/16.
174. FO.371/63020, J1952/79/16.

improve his relations with the Wafd in 1949.[175] His brother, Hilmī, was a Wafdist and probably was used as a channel for communication. By this point, however, there was no incentive for the Wafd to collaborate with a party which commanded so little public support. Makram tried very hard to persuade al-Nahḥās to boycott the elections because he feared that his party would do badly in them.[176] At the same time, he tried to come to an arrangement with the Liberals and Saʿdists but they wanted nothing to do with him.[177] He had earlier been invited to join the coalition cabinet of Sirrī Pasha but his conditions were so extravagant that he was left out.[178] The best he could hope for was some sort of coalition government formed after the elections and he appears to have suggested to the British Embassy that they intervene to produce such a result.[179] How he intended to deal with the public reaction to such interference is not recorded. For someone who tried to build political support on the strength of his anti-British credentials, this was an astonishing volte face.

Makram soon gave up the idea of an election boycott and an attempted rapprochement with either al-Nahḥās or the British. He and al-Nahḥās attacked one another freely during the election campaign. As the British Embassy noted, Makram was "Fighting a losing battle and [had] made the fact all the more obvious by canvassing the support and collaboration of some of the more extreme elements of the dissolved

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175. FO.371/74364, J5696/1015/16.
176. Ibid.
177. FO.371/73460, J5658/1015/16.
178. He demanded a second portfolio for his weak party and the abolition of martial law. FO.371/73465, J6035/1015/16.
179. FO.371/73464, J4279/1015/16.

Muslim Brethren..."[180] Al-Kutla failed to win any seats in the new Wafdist-dominated Chamber and this effectively finished Makram's career.

The reaction of the Coptic community to Makram was an ambivalent one. His father had converted to Protestantism, a religion Makram at least nominally shared until he returned to Orthodoxy in 1923. Many orthodox resented those who fractured the unity of the Holy Church; they may also have disliked Makram's convenient conversion to Orthodoxy. Makram's lack of interest in the community and its welfare only reinforced the sense of estrangement. For example, Misr suggested that Makram's first name, William, which he never used, was somehow illustrative of his isolation from the community.[181] However, he was still a Christian and a Copt, only conversion to Islam could change this; and, as one who had overcome the handicap of religion to achieve great political success, he was an object of pride and a symbol of the new equality. He was both praised and criticized, paraded as a great patriot and branded as the betrayer of his community. Copts disliked his familiarity with and political use of Islam, not simply because it sounded hypocritical on the tongue of a non-Muslim, but because a Copt, of all Egyptians, ought to have had the sense to leave religion out of political debate. Misr criticized Makram for repeatedly referring to Christ as "Jesus, the son of Miriam", thereby implying a denial of Christ's divinity. The paper suggested that Makram would do well to seek instruction in Christianity and to alter his stock political phrase to "I am an Egyptian [instead of "a Muslim"] in country and a Christian in religion".[182]

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180. FO.371/80347, E1016/1/16.
181. Misr, 23 April 1936, p.1.
182. Misr, 15 April 1936, p.1.

From the mid-1940s, Makram became something of a liability and an embarrassment to the community. Even if he had shown an interest in lessening sectarian tensions, the weakness of al-Kutla would have given him little power to do so. His party's interest in the problem of Muslim hostility to Copts was limited to praising itself as an example of Copt-Muslim unity. As the party paper pointed out, al-Kutla's leader was a Copt and his followers mostly Muslims.[183] From 1937, there was always fear in the community that Makram's extravagant behaviour threatened them.[184] Misr blamed ʿUbaid in part for the bad pass to which the community had come by 1951. He had ignored, wrote the paper, his responsibility to the Copts. At a time when many were giving primacy to their religious beliefs, Makram was wearing a "patriotic cloak" over his.[185] To Misr, Makram seemed hardly to be a Copt.[186]

The Copts were not unaware that Makram had separated himself from them for political reasons. He was not the only Coptic politician to do this; he was simply the most successful. Without this separation, he would not have reached the position he did. Perhaps this is what many Copts came to resent the most: that one could not be devoutly Christian and show public concern for the community and be a noteworthy success in politics. To Muslims, Makram was a symbol of equality and unity, but he was also evidence that non-Muslims could rise above parochial concerns and make their first interests national ones. Despite Makram's clear evidence of this, his very success made him the object, as Misr realized, of more anti-Coptic propaganda than any other

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183. Al-Kutla, 20 December 1946, p.2.
184. See FO.371/45930, J399/10/16, for an expression of just this fear before the 1945 election.
185. Misr, 27 August 1951, p.1.
186. Misr, 7 April 1947, p.3

Christian politician. It was not, however, the propaganda which ruined his political career but his own miscalculations; including, it would seem, a mistake as to what was and was not possible for a Copt. Had he remained within the Wafdist fold, he might have withstood the political storm of the late 1940s and would surely have strengthened his old party.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COPTS AND THE STATE

The state hoped to see the Copts exchange their anachronistic communal identity for a modern, national one but still was doubtful of both their ability and desire to do so. Consequently, it tried to bind the Copts more tightly to it at the same time that it hindered this work by protecting the Muslim hold on state institutions. Copts increasingly saw the state apparatus as biased against them; their access to it was restricted and its interference in their cultural and religious affairs was intolerable. By the late 1940s, the Copts could feel the state's chains tightening and there was little to compensate for it. There were more theoretical objections to equality than there had been in the 1920s; if anything, Egypt seemed to be moving farther and farther away from her ideal. Most Muslims probably did not care whether the state infringed upon or respected traditional millet autonomy; but they did care that the Copts, in their practice of Christianity and their demands on the state remain relatively invisible. The state could offer the Copts protection and a degree of religious tolerance (although even this traditional obligation seemed to be questioned by the 1940s); anything more than this could and would be construed as catering to them.

A. The Issue of Inequality

1. Economic Behaviour

The division between Copts and Muslims in this century was not complicated by a class division. Economic power was not in the hands of one community, while political power remained in the hands of

the other; nor did Muslims completely monopolize both. They assuredly held the balance of political power and their sheer numerical majority gave them vast economic resources on which to draw. Each community did complain about the economic behaviour of the other; however, grievances were based not on a serious inequity in the division of wealth but on a fundamental suspicion of those who were different. There was no sense in either community that they were completely shut out from all the economic goods life could afford; the Copts, however, were not entirely unjustified in thinking that they had a special problem of access to the goods the state could provide. Although Copts were sometimes inclined to attribute "scarcity" to discrimination, they were, in this period, marginally better educated and marginally wealthier as a group than Muslims.[1] Education has always been a route of escape from minority status. This is not to suggest that there were not many poor, illiterate Copts; about one-half of the Coptic population earned its living from agriculture,[2] and most of those were engaged in subsistence farming.

As far as can be determined, Copts and Muslims acquired land in much the same way in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Influential and loyal Coptic officials were granted land by a grateful government or were given the first chance to buy choice state land, and wealthy merchants chose to invest their profits in land.[3] Most,

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1. In 1917, 12.3 per cent of Muslim Egyptians and 30.7 per cent of Copts were literate. See also Gorst's Report on the Affairs of Egypt, 1911 (Accounts and Papers, C111), Cd.5633.
2. Gabriel Baer, Population and Society in the Arab East (London 1964), p.97.
3. Ra'ūf ʿAbbās Ḥāmid, al-Nizām al-'Ijtimāʿī fī misr, 1837-1914 (Cairo 1973), pp.96-100. Gabriel Baer, A History of Land Ownership in Modern Egypt, 1800-1950 (London 1962), pp.63-137. Baer notes that the Copts did not stand out as an important group of landowners until the 1880s, but this emergence seems to have had nothing to do with the British Occupation. It is possible, however, that the Copts believed that the British presence would protect their investment in land and so were more willing to purchase property. Cromer's establishment of credit in the 1890s did make it easier to buy big estates.

but not all, of the big Coptic estates were in Upper Egypt; several exceeded 1,000 feddans, including those of the Ghālī, Dūs, Khayyāt, Wīsā, Fānūs 'Abskharūn, Hannā, ᶜUbaid, Bishāra and Jrais families.[4] By the end of the last century, the Copts were paying 16 per cent of the taxes on agricultural land, although they were officially counted at around 6 per cent of the population.[5] Even allowing for the fact that they were undercounted, these figures suggest that they owned marginally more farm land than their proportion of the population would have suggested. Perhaps curiously and certainly fortunately, this does not seem to have roused Muslim ire. It was the large landowning families, Muslim and Copt, who carried disproportionate weight in the political system; and their economic interests gave them a powerful incentive to co-operate against pressure from below and from the outside.

Unlike other, smaller minorities in Egypt, the Copts preferred to invest in farm land and real estate and not in the development of industry. The strong participation of foreign minorities in large-scale commercial and industrial ventures perhaps created problems for both Copts and Muslims. The only Copt on the Board of Bank Misr, an enterprise aimed at Egyptianizing the economy, at its foundation was 'Iskandar Masīha. Kāmil 'Ibrāhīm eventually succeeded him. Copts did serve on the Boards of Directors of Bank Misr subsidiaries and of other companies, but in 1951 only 4 per cent of all company directors were Copts.[6]

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4. CCEH, ᶜAbdīn Palace Archives, Biographical Card Index; ᶜAlī Barakāt, Tatawwur al-Malakiyya al-Zirāᶜiyya fī Misr, appendix 6 (Cairo 1977); Ḥāmid, al-Niẓām al-'Ijtimāᶜī, pp.96-100.
5. Charles Issawi, Egypt: An Economic and Social Analysis (Oxford 1947), p.34. Another source contradicts this and suggests that the Copts paid 16 per cent of all property taxes. See "al-'Aqbāt fī al-Duwal al-'Islāmiyya", al-Hilāl 19 (1910-11), pp.104-5.
6. Charles Issawi, Egypt in Revolution: An Economic Analysis (London 1963), p.90. Tawfīq Dūs, who was a member of the boards of directors of ten companies, and Ṣādiq Wahbah of eleven in 1941 were the most active in this sphere. Others appointed to various boards included Wahīb Dūs, Nakhla al-Muṭīᶜī, Charles Bushrā Ḥannā, Rāghib Ḥannā, Ṣādiq Ḥinain, Kāmil Ṣidqī, Wāṣif Simaika and Shukrī and Fahmī Wīṣā. See The Stock Exchange Yearbook of Egypt (Cairo 1941).

Many of these men were wealthy landowners, and some were influential politicians. The list of Coptic directors was much longer by 1951; Many Copts by then held more than two directorships although a 1947 law formally prohibited this. No doubt more Copts were nominated to directorships because of a second law requiring that one-third of the members of the board of any new company be Egyptian.

Muslims could and did sometimes hinder Coptic access to various kinds of economic activity, a fact that helps explain the Coptic feeling of dependency on the civil service. The Coptic press periodically voiced complaints about discrimination in both state-owned and private companies;[7] and it does seem that, by the late 1940s, there was more government pressure on companies to hire Muslim Egyptians than Copts.[8] For example, in 1947 the Egyptian Labour Office denied a certificate of Egyptian nationality to a Copt who wished to work for an American firm in Alexandria.[9]

Curiously, there were few attempts at communal commercial ventures. There was, however, in the late 1940s, when the Copts were meeting with increasing discrimination in both the public and private sectors, a push to establish specifically Coptic enterprises; a bank and other kinds of companies were among those suggested. In 1947 a Coptic bank, the Pharaonic Bank, was established. Salāma Mūsā praised the venture,[10] and Misr faithfully printed the names of all the subscribers in an effort to boost their number. Other newspapers condemned the bank as

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7. See the complaints about discrimination in ʿAbbūd's companies and particularly in the sugar company in Naj Hamādī. Misr, 10 December 1947, p.1; 23 December 1949, p.4.
8. FO.371/63029, J1974/152/16.
9. FO.371/63029, J2860/152/16.
10. Misr, 10 November 1947, p.1.

divisive; and Mūsā retorted that, in that case, so were the Muslim Brethren's economic projects which no one thought to criticize.[11] Unfortunately, the bank failed to sell enough shares and collapsed. Tawfīq Hinain, a Coptic journalist, speculated that the Copts had been afraid to buy shares in what would appear to Muslims to be a chauvinist venture.[12]

2. The Civil Service[13]

Government employment in this poor country with its relatively privileged bureaucracy was prized for its security and was the goal of many ill- and well-educated Egyptians. Fair access was considered critical by both Muslims and Copts, particularly as the bureaucracy grew and the number of posts held by the British declined.[14] In addition, the better-educated Copts had long occupied a greater proportion of bureaucratic posts than their percentage of the population justified. However, by the turn of the century, Muslims were becoming better-educated and were beginning to compete for these positions. Although the number of Coptic officials increased in this period, their

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11. Ibid.
12. Misr, 6 December 1947, p.1.
13. Information on the civil service is derived largely from The Egyptian Directory, an annual publication which listed Ministry officials of senior and middle grades. However, by the 1950s, the Directory included fewer middle-level positions. In addition, pension lists and individual files deposited in the Dār al-Maḥfūẓāt were used. The pension index is only in moderately good order, and occasionally an individual died or retired before or after the year he actually appears in it. One problem in working with lists of names must be noted: it is not always possible to distinguish between Muslim and Coptic names and between Coptic names and those of Syrian origin.
14. The cadre increased from 15,000 in 1915 to 42,000 in 1940, but in 1930 there were about 190,000 non-cadre employees. Marius Deeb, "The Wafd and its Rivals", unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford University 1971, pp.442, 445.

share of the civil service declined. The 1937 census recorded a decline in the Coptic share of 35 per cent in 27 years, to 9.1 per cent.[15] This was not a formal government policy but rather a tacit admission that a bureaucracy which was thought to be dominated by a minority would lose credibility.[16]

The Copts were unable to grasp the necessity of achieving an ethnic balance. They did not think that their percentage of the population should be a factor in making appointments,[17] but they did use percentages when the figures were in their favour. If 50 per cent of all Egyptian lawyers were Copts, they argued that 50 per cent of all judges should be Copts.[18] The British, who regarded the decline in the proportion of Coptic officials as fair, were unsympathetic.[19] Although they believed discrimination to exist and sometimes investigated Coptic allegations, they seem never to have intervened except perhaps occasionally on a strictly individual basis.[20]

The highest percentages of Copts between 1922 and 1952 were found in the Ministries of Communications and Public Works. Many Copts were employed by the post office and railway; there were also many Coptic engineers in the irrigation service of the Works Ministry. Coptic representation in the Finance Ministry was also good due to the Copts'

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15. Baer, Population and Society, p.97.
16. Cynthia Enlow, "Ethnicity, Bureaucracy and State Building in Africa and Latin America", Ethnic and Racial Studies 1 (1978), p.340.
17. Tawfīq Dūs argued this at the 'Asyūṭ Conference on the curious grounds that it might enable the Copts to obtain posts for which they were unqualified. The Coptic Congress Held at Assiout on March 6, 7 and 8, 1911 (no place, n.d.), pp.22-3.
18. Misr, 16 November 1951, p.1.
19. FO.407/215, no.52. Sir P. Lorraine to Sir J. Simon, 21 May 1932; FO.407/221, Part 122, Enclosure in No.5. An Appreciation of the Situation of the Copts by Mr. Hamilton, 1937.
20. FO.371/16118, J1475/194/16.

traditional expertise in monetary matters.[21] It was probably in these three Ministries that the Copts had their best chances of promotion.

A fair number of Copts were employed by the Ministries of Justice, Public Health and the Interior, while relatively few worked in the Ministry of Agriculture. Even fewer were employed by the Ministries of Education, Defence, Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs. The latter was the preserve of the Palace and there seems to have been considerable pressure to keep the diplomatic corps Muslim and Turkic.[22] Those few Coptic diplomats who managed to overcome the Palace's prejudice were generally scions of old, prominent Coptic families, like the Wahbāhs and Ghālīs, who had considerable European experience. The Copts had good access to junior and intermediate positions; however, they complained repeatedly that all important civil service posts were reserved for Muslims.[23] There is some truth to this complaint. Not only were few Copts employed in some Ministeries and Departments that had considerable power over the Copts, like the police and the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs, but their access to positions of influence in other Ministries was limited. Very rarely was a Copt made Under-Secretary; when Sādiq Hinain, a Wafdist Copt, was appointed to that post in the Ministry of Finance, the Liberal Constitutionalist

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21. The British noted in 1928 that 87 per cent of the officials in the Direct Taxes Department were Copts. The percentage is not nearly this high in the Egyptian Directory so presumably they occupied predominantly junior posts. FO.407/206, Enclosure in No.32. Complaint by Coptic Officials, February 1928. A list of routine transfers in the Department in August 1937 included no Muslim names. Found in the pension file of ʿAzīz Habashī in Dār al-Mahfūzāt, No.368/3/3656/44073.
22. The Wafdist Copt, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīḥa, claims that such pressure was put on him when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the last Wafdist Cabinet. Interview, 13 June 1979.
23. See Miṣr, 21 June 1935, p.1; 15 January 1938, p.1; Zaghīb Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud! al-Waḥda al-Waṭaniyya w-al-'Akhlaq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo, n.d.), pp.11-12, 40.

journal al-Kashkūl objected.[24] Few Copts reached the top posts in any Ministry. Few directors of departments or sub-departments were Copts. This is almost as true of the post office, where many Copts were employed, as it is of the Ministry of Education. There were perhaps more Copts in senior positions in the Ministry of Finance. Copts were appointed Financial Secretary to different Ministries, and there were Copts at high levels in the State Legal Department (Contentieux d'Etat). In the Ministry of the Interior, there was never a Coptic Governor or Deputy Governor of a province; nor, in this period, a Coptic District Office (Ma'mūr Markaz).[25] As one observer noted, the Muslim public might be induced to accept an iconoclast as governor, but never a Copt.[26] There were some Coptic 'Umdas, appointed to head predominantly Coptic villages. Copts were represented in good numbers at lower levels in the provincial administration, particularly on the clerical and financial sides. Most of the provincial chief clerks were Copts; this was generally the most senior post they held in a province.

In other ministries, Copts were employed mainly in those departments concerned with accounting, record keeping, the budget, purchasing and stocks, translation and, in some instances, personnel. It was in such departments that a Copt was most likely to be appointed director or assistant director. In addition, they often held technical positions; for example, those Copts employed by the Ministry of Agriculture were mainly engineers.

Copts charged that Muslims were favoured for the Judiciary, but this claim has little merit. Often around 10 per cent of those named

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24. Al-Kashkūl, March 1924, p.14.
25. One 1911 report recorded that there were a few Coptic District Officers. FO.371/1111, 31390/4079/16.
26. Ibid.

judges of Courts of the First Instance and the lesser Summary Courts were Copts. Fewer Copts were appointed to the bench of the Appeals Court[27] and the superior Cour de Cassation,[28] Coptic complaints about the Parquet were more accurate. Very few Coptic lawyers were able to secure employment in this elite corps, from which judges were often drawn. In addition, few Copts seems to have worked at middle levels in the judicial administration.

The frequently voiced complaint that no Copt had ever served as director of a state school was, with one exception, correct. 'Ibrāhīm Taklā headed a secondary school in Cairo in 1929-30.[29] The less exalted ranks of the Education Inspectorate did include Copts, whose numbers jumped from one in 1925 to 19 in 1943 but without in any way improving the Coptic hold on the Inspectorate. Many Copts also taught in the University but only 10 per cent held the title of professor and none were ever appointed to top administrative posts.[30] In the Ministry of Defence, there were some Copts in the personnel, budget and records offices, but few overall in the general administration. While there were some Coptic army officers,[31] their influence seems to have been slight.[32] This was as much due to the lack of a tradition

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27. In 1925 three out of 34 judges were Copts but, by 1950, only two out of about 50 judges were.
28. There were no Coptic "conseillers" in 1939 and only one in 1943 and 1951.
29. Misr recalled in 1946 that objections had been voiced to his appointment. Misr, 12 December 1946, p.1.
30. In addition, periodic complaints were voiced about discrimination against Coptic students. Misr was disturbed in 1929 when al-Siyāsa suggested that only a certain percentage of Coptic students be allowed to pass the exams. Misr, 16 September 1929, p.3.
31. R.H. Dekmejian suggests that 7 per cent of the officer corps was Christian in the late 1940s. Egypt Under Nasser (London 1972), p.21. However, more officers seem to have been in the Medical Corps than any other branch of the service.
32. FO.407/221, part 122. Enclosure in No.5. An Appreciation of the Situation of the Copts by Mr. Hamilton, 1937. He also noted that those who did have influence were gradually being side-tracked. Only one Copt Mīrālai Farīd ᶜAbd Allah, conspired with the Free Officers.

of entering the army and making a career of it as to discrimination.

The number of senior posts open to Copts may have decreased over time. In 1932 the Financial Adviser, Hugh-Jones, reported that this was the case in the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance; in contrast with past practice, very few heads of sub-departments were Copts.[33] By 1951 the numbers of Coptic Inspectors in the Ministry of Education and judges in Courts of the First Instance had declined. Misr complained on two occasions that there were too few Copts among recent appointments to the Judiciary and the Parquet.[34] There were, in fact, more Copts in the Parquet in 1922 than in later years. In addition, there were fewer Copts in the provincial agricultural service and the post office by 1951-2; significantly more Copts were employed at higher levels in the latter in 1925. Muslims eventually broke into the ranks of the provincial chief clerks[35] and, at a lower level, they finally gained admittance to the tax collectors' school.[36] Both had been a Coptic preserve.

There seems to have been no appreciable difference, however, in the number of Copts employed by the railway, telegraph and telephone administration or by the Finance Ministry. Given the system of

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33. It is not clear whether he is comparing 1932 with the 1920s or some earlier time. FO.371/16118, J1475/194/16.
34. The paper also alleged that the Minister of Justice's predecessor had announced that Coptic appointments to the Parquet and the bench must be kept in line with their proportion of the population. Misr, 6 November 1951, p.6, and 16 November 1951, p.1. However, more Copts sat on the bench of Summary Courts in 1951 than in 1949.
35. FO.371/16118, J1475/194/16.
36. Just before the 1936 election, Miṣr al-Fatāt made a point of contention of Makram's closure of the school, claiming that he did so in behalf of the Copts. This was the second time Makram had closed the school so perhaps the notion was not far fetched. The school had originally been opened by ᶜAbd al-Wahāb Pasha who was not known for his love of his Coptic compatriots. FO.141/543, 19/44/36.

clientalism, Copts knew that the loss of one job to a Copt often entailed the loss of others to the community. Civil servants were expected to favour their co-religionists; accordingly, the Copts saw the long arm of fanaticism reaching into every Ministry. Misr and al-Manāra al-Misriyya published many articles on this problem; if the frequency with which these articles appeared is any gauge, it was a problem which grew worse in the mid-1940s. The appointment of a Muslim as Director of the Coptic Museum in 1950 in defiance of the law was a blow which seemed to symbolize the mounting discrimination Copts felt they met with in all walks of Egyptian life.[37]

Misr was most likely to champion the cause of Coptic employment when a non-Wafdist government was in power.[38] However, the most serious campaign mounted by the paper was in 1928 when a Wafd-Liberal coalition government under Tharwat was in power. Misr published articles in almost every issue criticizing particularly the Ministry of Finance, which had transferred several officials in an economy move. The campaign seemed designed to embarrass the Cabinet, already in some difficulty over the treaty. As al-Kāshif remarked, it was an inopportune moment to raise a matter which could affect Britain's willingness to relinquish the third Reserved Point.[39] Misr was Wafdist in sympathy and it ceased its complaints when al-Nahhās became Prime Minister in March. It might seem that Misr was preparing the way for a purely Wafdist government; however, the Wafdist press strenuously

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37. This contravened Law No.14 (1933) which specified that only a Copt who had the approval of the Patriarch could be Director.
38. Several such articles were published in 1935, 1938 and 1946.
39. Al-Kāshif, 21 January 1928, p.4; 28 January 1928, p.4.

attacked Misr's charges as lies. There is no indication that the Wafd was trying to break up the coalition by devious means.[40] Wāsif Ghālī expressed surprise at Misr's behaviour and reaffirmed that there was no difference between Muslims and Copts in national affairs.[41] The answer may lie in the fact that the Wafd, with its own press, had ceased to subsidize Misr. Accordingly, Misr was in financial difficulties, which served to spur sensationalism. Hugh-Jones noted that the paper, normally of "insignificant circulation", sold very well during its campaign.[42] Another possible explanation was the desire to secure, through pressure, the newly-vacant Directorship of Direct Taxes for a Copt.[43] The Residency reported that Tawfīq Dūs was said to be behind Misr's campaign;[44] this fits with another report that the Palace was intriguing for the fall of the Thaarwat Cabinet.[45] However, Misr never exhibited any affection for Tawfīq Dūs, and it is unlikely that it would have been amenable to his suggestions, unless they were accompanied by some kind of financial incentive.

There were areas for legitimate complaint, but Misr's facts in this case seem twisted. The paper alleged that an unreasonable number of those dismissed in the Department of Direct Taxes were Copts.[46] If the British Financial Adviser and the Egyptian Minister of Finance are to be believed, officials were only transferred and not dismissed, and more Muslims were transferred than Copts.[47] Selection of these

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40. See FO.407/206, for December 1927 and January-February 1928.
41. Al-'Ahrām, 30 January 1928, p.5; FO.407/206, J519/18/16.
42. FO.141/685, 8424/65/28.
43. Ibid.
44. FO.407/206, No.32 (Enclosure). Complaint by Coptic Officials, Feburary 1928.
45. FO.371/13117, J846/4/16.
46. Ninety-four Copts and thirteen Muslims, Misr, 23 January and 2 February 1928, p.1.
47. FO.407/206, No.32 (Enclosure). Complaint by Coptic Officials, February 1928; No.32, Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 23 Feburary 1928.

officials to be transferred was entrusted to a Committee headed by Holden, a member of the Financial Adviser's staff.[48] Holden believed both that there was some discrimination against the Copts in promotions and that neither the Minister nor the Under-Secretary liked Copts. Hugh-Jones noted that neither official was likely to victimize Copts in any significant way unless the political situation suddenly called for it.[49] As Copts held most of the positions in this department, there was no reason, as al-Balāgh pointed out, that a majority of those transferred should not have been Copts.[50] Al-Balāgh asked if the Copts were going to declare themselves oppressed everytime the government was obliged to transfer or discipline a Coptic employee;[51] such was the Copts' sensitivity that sometimes the complaints were out of proportion to the misdeeds. Kawkab al-Sharq suggested that British officials had encouraged their Coptic colleagues in an attempt to provoke fanaticism and provide an excuse for intervention.[52] Sinūt Hannā and Makram ʿUbaid also publicly denied Miṣr's charges and the latter, in an al-'Ahrām interview, condemned Miṣr's communal approach.[53] Miṣr responded by attacking the Wafd in February [54]

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48. FO.141/685, 8424/65/28.
49. Ibid.
50. Al-Balāgh, 29 January 1928, PPF.
51. Ibid., 30 January 1928, PPF. See also Chamber Debates, twenty-fifth session, 31 January 1928; Miṣr, 17 January 1928, p.2.
52. FO.407/206, J683/18/16.
53. Al-'Ahrām, 6 February 1928, p.6; al-Balāgh, 7 February 1928, p.1, and 13 February 1928, p.1.
54. Miṣr, 24 February 1928, p.1; 28 February 1928, p.1. Miṣr could conceivably have wanted to destroy the treaty, but this was also the goal of Wafd extremists, like Makram ʿUbaid, who criticized Miṣr's ethnic campaign.

At other times, Miṣr presented evidence of discrimination in virtually every Ministry. In 1926 it published several articles recounting the sad fate of Dr. Kāmil Ḥannā, an employee of the Ministry of Public Health, who committed suicide when he failed to obtain an unexpected promotion.[55] Several articles complaining of demotions, unjust transfers, the promotions of Muslims over the heads of Copts and a general reluctance to appoint Copts appeared in the summer of 1935.[56] Miṣr mourned the days of Saʿd Zaghlūl, when, claimed the paper, no distinction was made between Copts and Muslims;[57] and, when the Wafd came back into power in 1936, the paper promised a return to equality.[58] In 1939 Miṣr complained about discrimination in the Ministries of Justice and Agriculture,[59] and in 1946 in the Ministry of Education.[60] In the latter year, Miṣr was convinced that the heads of certain government departments had issued instructions not to hire any non-Muslims.[61] The Wafd itself was capable of using this weapon to rally the Coptic faithful; in 1941 it was the source of a rumour which suggested that the King had ordered all Ministers and senior officials not to appoint any Copts to government posts.[62]

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55. The paper did, however, present at least two dissenting opinions. Miṣr, 25 October 1926, p.2; 27 October 1926, p.1; 3 November 1926, p.1; 29 November 1926, p.1; 17 December 1926, p.1. La Bourse Egyptienne, 23 October 1926, p.3.
56. All officials, however, were subject to arbitrary treatment by their Ministries. See Miṣr, 17 June 1935, p.3; 19 July 1935, p.1; 26 July 1935, p.1; 1 August 1935, p.1.
57. Miṣr, 19 July 1935, p.1. Wafd Ministries, claimed Miṣr in another article, worked to realize equality. Miṣr, 29 June 1935, p.1.
58. Miṣr, 27 May 1936, p.1.
59. Miṣr, 4 March 1939, p.5; 14 March 1939, p.5. Al-Kashkūl took up the subject of Coptic complaints on 10 March and suggested that Copts believed that the Palace had blessed this policy of discrimination. Al-Kashkūl, 10 March 1939, pp.3-5.
60. However, the paper was pleased when the new Minister of Education announced that there was no reason that Copts could not be head-masters. Miṣr, 12 December 1946, p.1.
61. Miṣr, 14 May 1946, p.2.
62. CCEH, F7/D7, Card 805, Security Reports: Report on Religious Discord, December 1941.

Although Misr generally refrained from attacking Wafd governments, it made clear its dissatisfaction with the 1950 Wafd Cabinet. The paper published several articles, as did al-Manāra al-Misriyya, on discrimination in various government departments.[63]

Non-Wafdists reversed the charges of discrimination and used them to prove the Wafd's partiality to Copts. Muslims were equally ready to suspect the Copts of an ambition to monopolize the civil service[64] so the non-Wafdist press had an audience for its allegations. The Liberal Constitutionalist papers were particularly vigilant. As early as 1923, al-Kashkūl pointed out that Coptic judges were biased in favour of their co-religionists.[65] During the 1930 Wafd Ministry, al-Siyāsa published several articles which suggested that the Wafd was conspiring to advance the interests of the Copts. First al-Siyāsa, reporting that the Wafd was considering making Makram ʿUbaid Minister to London, protested, insisting that there were already enough Coptic diplomats.[66] A few days later, the paper complained that three Egyptian ambassadors were Copts, a clear contravention of the interests of the Muslim majority.[67] Another article alleged that all the important officials the Wafd Ministry had dismissed were Muslims and that more than one-half of the Ministry's promotions and appointments

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63. Misr, 1 November 1950, p.1; 6 December 1950, p.1; 3 September 1951, p.1; 6 November 1951, p.6; al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 12 June 1950, pp.1-2.
64. Al-Minbar claimed that the Copts' principal object in life was to amass wealth, obtain high ranks and fill government offices. Quoted in the Egyptian Mail, 4 November 1920, p.2. See also allegations of Coptic trickery in al-Kashkūl, 20 May 1923.
65. Al-Kashkūl, 31 August 1923, p.4.
66. Al-Siyāsa, 9 February 1930, PPF. There is no confirmation in the Public Record Office archives that the Wafd considered this. ʿUbaid was entitled to a portfolio and might not have wanted to risk losing his influence by remaining outside the country when the Wafd was in power.
67. Misr asked what was Islamic about the work of representing Egypt in Switzerland or Washington. Misr, 13 February 1930, p.1.

were Copts.[68] For this, Haikal was called before the Public Prosecutor's office and he was later able to report, probably with some effect, that the Prosecutor was a Copt.[69] Miṣr answered the allegations and printed the names of prominent Coptic officials who had been sacked.[70] It also published several articles defending tax collectors, whose honour al-Siyāsa had besmirched.[71] When Ṣādiq Ḥinain, former Wafdist Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, was again attacked by al-Siyāsa for favouring Copts, Miṣr observed that the Copts sometimes hated to see a co-religionist successful for fear that criticism would follow his appointment.[72] In 1935 al-Shaʿb reproached the Wafdist, Kāmil Ṣidqī, for stirring up trouble when no Copts were included in a list of judicial appointments.[73]

Just before the 1936 election, the British reported that Miṣr al-Fatāt planned, as part of its campaign, to accuse Makram of using his influence to obtain government appointments for Copts.[74] The opposition then criticized the 1936 Wafd government for appointing and promoting too many Copts and it decried Coptic influence, which was slight, in the Ministry of Education.[75]

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68. Al-Siyāsa, 9 February 1930, PPF.
69. Ibid., 20 April 1930, p.5.
70. Miṣr, 10 February 1930, p.1.
71. Miṣr alleged that tax collectors had been subjected to an unreasonable number of transfers in the previous government. Miṣr, 12 March 1930, p.5.
72. Ibid., p.5.
73. Makram was reported to be trying to get his brother-in law appointed judge. Al-Shaʿb, 5 March 1935, p.4; 7 March 1935, p.4.
74. FO.141/543, 19/44/36.
75. Miṣr, 19 October 1936, p.1.

Similar accusations followed in 1937 and during the 1938 election campaign. As Hamilton, the Assistant Oriental Secretary, noted, the opposition was prepared to inflame passions against the Copts for party purposes.[76] In November the government felt obliged to issue a statement denying al-Balāgh's report that favouritism had been shown toward Copts in recent appointments.[77] Al-Kashkūl suggested that Copts formed 73 per cent of the student body of the College of Medicine, 93 per cent of the Railway, Telegraph and Telephone Administration, 70 per cent of the Ministry of the Interior, and 80 per cent of the Post Office, and that the Copts earned £E8 million out of £E12 million allocated for salaries in the top civil service grades.[78] The journal also accused Coptic professors of favouring Coptic students.[79]

Complaints by both Copts and Muslims were not always timed for political effect. Copts generally were concerned to preserve or increase the share of the bureaucracy they had held in the 19th century. Muslim complaints usually were characterized by a strong feeling that the Copts had risen above themselves; that it was the minority which was obliged to make adjustments to satisfy the majority and not vice versa. Often articles in the non-Wafdist press had a threatening tone.[80] Shaikh al-Marāghī, complaining about Coptic influence in the Ministry of the Interior, suggested that religious fanaticism could play a valid part in reducing that influence.[81] Such charges and counter-charges lead to the question of whether some Cabinets did discriminate against

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76. FO.407/221, No.5 (Enclosure). An appreciation of the Situation of the Copts by Mr. Hamilton, 1937.
77. Henry Ayrout, "Egypt: Interférences de la politique et de la religion", En Terre d'Islam 13 (1938), p.194.
78. Al-Kashkūl, 25 February 1938, pp.1-2. This was repeated, with minor alterations in the percentages, on 20 March 1939, pp.3-5.
79. Al-Kashkūl, 25 February 1938, p.4.
80. See al-Kashkūl, 10 March 1939, pp.3-5.
81. FO.407/221, No.27. D.V. Kelly to Mr. Eden, 2 September 1937.

or favour Copts. It is a question which is difficult to answer with any accuracy given the expansion of the bureaucracy and periodic Ministerial reorganizations. One authority believes that the first Wafd Ministry appointed many Copts to important positions in the civil service.[82] Another contemporary scholar suggests that the 1928 and 1938 Muhammad Mahmūd Cabinets deliberately reduced the number of Coptic officials and that each return of the Wafd to power brought compensation for the Copts.[83] The British in both 1928 and 1938 did record strong Christian feelings of victimization,[84] and they confirmed that there was considerable discrimination against Copts in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[85] Mahmūd and some of his Cabinet members had anti-Coptic reputations,[86] so it is possible that their report is true. It should, however, be noted that the British were sometimes as susceptible to political rumours as the Egyptian press.

Taking the suggestion about the Wafd first and examining the 1922 and 1924 lists of Ministry of Finance employees, it cannot be said that the Wafd brought significantly more Copts into the Ministry. This would seem to be true of other Ministries as well. Most Copts appearing on the 1924-5 Egyptian Directory lists were also on the 1922 lists, and they were not in substantially different positions.

In general, there do not seem to have been significantly more Copts employed at senior and middle levels in Wafdist Ministries than in non-

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82. Although he notes that it is impossible to prove that the Cabinet issued a set of instructions to this effect. Interview, Dr. Zāhir Riyāḍ, 1 June 1979.
83. He noted that this was especially true of Finance and Communications, but he presents no evidence to support what is probably hearsay, Pierre Rondot, "L'Evolution historique des Coptes d'Egypte", Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain 22 (1950), p.140.
84. FO.371/21948, J4332/6/16. FO.407/206, No.61 (Enclosure 3). Note on a Visit to Asyut, February 1928 by L. Grafftey-Smith.
85. FO.407/208, No.27 (Enclosure 1.). Note on a Visit to Mansura, February 1929. FO.407/217, Part 115, No.126, Sir M. Lampson to Sir J.Simon, 13 June 1934. FO.371/16118, J1485/194/16; J1719/194/16.
86. FO.141/489, 71/5/32.

Wafdist ones. A surprising number of Coptic employees were left to work in peace regardless of who was in power.[87] It is possible that it was at lower levels that the Maḥmūd Cabinets dismissed most Copts, but it seems unlikely that the ubiquitous teamen would be a matter of much attention. It does not appear from government pension lists that either Maḥmūd Cabinet placed an unusual number of Copts on pension; but, of course, those dismissed might not have been entitled to a pension. However, it may be safe to conclude that those officials fired by any Ministry had unsatisfactory political ties and since Coptic support for the Wafd was strong, many of those dismissed by non-Wafdist Cabinets were Copts.[88]

a. Coptic Cabinet Ministers

It was traditional even for Cabinets in the period before independence to include one Copt. This was both expected and accepted. For example, when Lampson insisted in 1943 that Kāmil Ṣidqī be removed as Minister of Finance, another Copt was immediately made Minister of Civil Defence to maintain Coptic representation. Only the Wafd broke with this custom, and then it did so by appointing two Copts. Haikal recalls in his Memoirs that there was considerable surprise when the Wafd named Murqus Ḥannā and Wāṣif Ghālī to its first Cabinet in 1924. Haikal praises himself for not exploiting the fact, although he did note the departure from tradition in al-Siyāsa.[89] Al-Siyāsa's Liberal colleague, al-Kashkūl, was not as restrained. It featured a conversation, purportedly overheard at the Coptic Ramses Club, between

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87. This is not true of judicial positions which had a high turnover probably because so many politicians were lawyers.
88. On the general subject of dismissals, see Haikal, Mudhakkirāt fī al-Siyāsa al-Miṣriyya, (Cairo 1953), vol.2, pp.93-4; ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Rāfiʿī, Fī ʾAʿqāb al-Thawra al-Miṣriyya, (Cairo 1951), vol.3, pp.69, 118; and ʿAbd al-ʿAzim Ramadān, Taṭawwur al-Haraka al-Waṭaniyya fī Miṣr, p.47.
89. See al-Siyāsa, 30 January 1924; Haikal, Mudhakkirāt, I, p.180.

prominent Wafdist Copts. In it, these Copts quarrelled over Cabinet posts and how many they could justifiably demand. Finally they agreed that the Copts should be rewarded with three portfolios, two Under-Secretaryships and at least one ambassadorship.[90] Later al-Kashkūl reported that there were to have been three Copts in the Cabinet but that opposition was so strong that the proposal was dropped.[91] In 1929 al-Siyāsa retroactively criticised the appointment of two Coptic Cabinet Ministers in 1924 as part of a general anti-Wafd campaign.[92] In 1928 the Watanist al-'Akhbār wrote that there were so many Copts in the Wafd Cabinet that the government might as well name Christians as Shaikh al-'Azhar and the Muftī of Egypt.[93] Criticism was also levelled at the 1930 Wafd Cabinet,[94] and in 1937 al-Kashkūl incorrectly suggested that the party was planning to add a third Copt to the Cabinet.[95]

After Makram left the Wafd in 1942, the Wafd named only one Copt to its Cabinets. This does not necessarily suggest that Makram was responsible for the earlier policy; the schism simply left fewer Copts entitled to Cabinet rank in the party. In addition, the symbolic value of having Copts in the Cabinet had declined and in the 1940s would have earned the Wafd little praise from any quarter. Most non-Wafdist Cabinets conformed to the older custom and gave only one portfolio to a Copt. There were two Copts in the 'Ahmad Māhir and al-Nuqrāshī Cabinets of 1944 and 1946; both were coalition governments including the heavily Coptic al-Kutla party. The only other exception occurred in the November 1934 Nasīm Cabinet, which had one Copt holding two portfolios.

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90. To cast further suspicion on Coptic allegiances, the dialogue is half in Egyptian colloquial and half in French. Al-Kashkūl, 18 January 1924, pp.7-9, 12.
91. Al-Kashkūl, 1 February 1924, p.3.
92. Al-Siyāsa, 17 September 1929, PPF.
93. FO.407/206, No.73 (Enclosure 7). Memorandum on the Egyptian Prees, 22 March-4 April 1928.
94. Al-Siyāsa, 20 April 1930, p.5.
95. Quoted by Jacques Berque, Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution (London 1972), p.505.

The Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Education and Endowments were never entrusted to a Copt.[96] From the April 1919 Rushdī Cabinet until the July 1952 ʿAlī Māhir Cabinet, the portfolio most frequently held by a Copt was Finance, an obvious choice given the number of Copts employed in the Ministry. From the 1924 Zaghlūl Cabinet until ʿUbaid's split in 1942, the Wafd alone appointed Copts Finance Minister; ʿUbaid was the only Copt to serve as Finance Minister in non-Wafdist Cabinets after this. Agriculture and Foreign Affairs were the two Ministries most often entrusted to Copts after Finance. Foreign Affairs was an unimportant portfolio before 1936 and, even after that, the Ministry was hampered by excessive Palace interference and the tendency of the British to ignore it. The post did require a man who was familiar with Europe, and this partly explains why Copts were often appointed. The Wafd again was more willing to appoint a Copt to Foreign Affairs than other parties, while all Coptic Ministers of Agriculture, a post of little power, served in non-Wafdist Cabinets. Trade and Industry, a Ministry created in the 1930s, often had a Coptic Minister, again usually in non-Wafdist Cabinets; this ministry seems to have had a good number of Coptic employees. The Ministry of Communications was held by a Copt in five Cabinets; other portfolios held by Copts included Health, Village and Local Affairs, Supply, Civil Defence and War. Salīb Sāmī, who had served as Royal Adviser to the Ministry, was, to his considerable surprise, appointed Minister of War in the 1933 Yahyā Cabinet. Sāmī claims that he was

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96. In 1910 when Butrus Ghālī was made Prime Minister, it was decided that although it was then customary for a Prime Minister to be his own Minister of the Interior, he could not do so. Part of the reason for this was that al-'Azhar was under the jurisdiction of the Interior. Buṭrus Ghālī retained Foreign Affairs instead. In 1919 Yūsuf Wahbah also held Finance. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm 'Amīn Ghālī, 19 March 1979.

uneasy with the appointment because he felt that an officer should be Minister, but it is more likely that he was concerned about the effect his religion would have on the high command.[97] A decade later, the repercussions Sāmī probably expected in 1933 occurred when Prime Minister Husain Sirrī tried to move Sāmī from Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Defence. Senior army officers objected, and Sāmī was transferred back to Foreign Affairs.[98]

Although the number of portfolios expanded from ten in 1925 to 16 in 1951, Coptic representation did not increase.[99] Obviously the appointment of two Copts to some Cabinets was an innovation to which some Egyptians were unable to reconcile themselves in more than two decades. By the late 1940s, increasing resentment of any visible Coptic role in politics may have made it impossible for any willing party to appoint two Copts to the Cabinet. In addition, from February 1946, those Copts who were appointed were relegated to uninfluential Ministries. The accusations of political opponents notwithstanding, Coptic Cabinet Ministers did not populate their Ministries with Copts.[100] Occasionally, the did employ a Copt as personal secretary, but this was surely an excusable indulgence. Some Copts, as well as Muslims, viewed

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97. Ṣalīb Sāmī, Dhikrayāt Siyāsī (Cairo 1952), pp.206-8. King Fu'ād told Sāmī that he personally desired his appointment, and Sāmī appears to have suspected that this was a manoeuvre designed to increase royal control over the army because of the intrinsically precarious position of any Coptic Minister. See also, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzim Ramadān, al-Jaiṣh al-Miṣri fī al-Siyāsa 1882-1936 (Cairo 1977), p.312.
98. This doomed the Cabinet reshuffle to failure and left an impression of instability. Sāmī soon ran into trouble with the King when he broke relations with the Vichy government without royal consent. Fārūq's behaviour over this issue resulted in the incident of 4 February 1942. FO.371/31566, J334/38/16.
99. This did not escape Coptic notice. See Miṣr, 6 July 1950, p.1.
100. For example, some Muslim employees in the Ministry of Agriculture accused their Minister, Nakhla al-Mutīᶜī, of discrimination, and this was repeated in the press. Al-'Ahrām, 2 August 1919, al-Siyāsa, 17 September 1929, PPF; al-Kashkūl, 4 September 1946; and al-Siyāsa, 19 September 1929, quoted in Pierre Rondot, Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain 22 (1950), p.139.

Coptic Cabinet Ministers as communal representatives or as men who were well placed to ensure that Coptic rights were respected. This was less a reflection of reality than a forlorn hope, and some Copts became increasingly angry in the 1940s that these representatives did so little for the community.[101]

b. Religious Instruction in State Schools

The problem of religious instruction in government schools was one new to the 20th century; before this, education was largely private. Copts educated their own children and taught them what they liked. Religious education only became a point of contention, for Muslims as well as Copts, when parents began to desire a modern education for their children and as the state came increasingly to provide that education. There were many private and church-affiliated Christian schools, but they could not educate all Coptic children.[102] The state had resources the community could never hope to match. Many parents could not afford a private education, and even some of those who could wanted their children to have the government school certificates which admitted their holders for many years to the civil service.[103] Education was one way to produce uniformity in the citizenry, and this uniformity was more likely to threaten the cultural integrity of the minority than the majority.

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101. Misr occasionally took a Coptic Minister to task when it felt that he was not fulfilling this function. In 1949 it criticized the Minister for failing to protect Coptic employees in the civil service, and in 1950 for failing to deal with the increase in violence against the Copts. In the aftermath of the Suez church burning in January 1952, many Copts called for their Minister to resign to express communal despair. See Misr, 21 December 1949, p.3., and 9 October 1950, p.1.
102. In 1927 the Copts had 403 schools, including Evangelical institutions, with a student body of 40,089. Misr, 29 June 1927, p.1.
103. FO.371/1111, 5672/5672/16.

The state dictated what Coptic children would be taught, first in state-owned schools and later in private Christian schools. In the former, Islamic religious instruction formed a larger part of the curriculum, particularly for the younger, more impressionable children. Not only were the Copts upset at the exposure of their children to lectures on Islam, but they were angry at the state's failure to use public revenue to provide equal Christian religious instruction. They believed that this failure had direct bearing on the health and vitality of the community, and they feared their children growing up with too little knowledge of their own religion and too much temptation to convert to Islam. Ultimately, Christian protests were aimed at protecting the community's autonomy and resolving inequities in the division of public money.

In this half-century of debate, no one in the Coptic community except the socialist Salāma Mūsā[104] criticized the principal of offering religious instruction in state schools and urged the complete secularization of education. Copts did argue for the use of secular materials in Arabic teaching, but mainly they were interested in seeing that their children were instructed in Christianity. Few Muslims proposed the secularization of public education; even Lutfi al-Sayyid[105] and Taha Husain[106] thought that it was in the Egyptian interest for the state to provide a firm grounding in Islam. In fact, many Muslims clamoured for more and more Islamic education as this period progressed.

The principal of providing Christian education in state schools was established early on when Khedive Ismā'īl, in endowing land for the

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104. See Misr, 15 March 1937, p.1.
105. Mounah Khouri, Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt (Leiden 1977). p.189.
106. He thought that Coptic children should be taught their own religion in state schools. The Future of Culture in Egypt, transl. Sidney Glazer (Washington, D.C. 1954), p.140.

expansion of elementary education, stipulated that Christian instruction for Christian students be included in the curriculum.[107] In 1907, in response to Coptic demands, the Ministry decided that Christianity could be taught in those state schools which had 15 Coptic students enrolled, on the condition that the Church pay the teachers.[108] In some heavily Coptic areas, there were exclusively Coptic kuttābs, providing the most basic kind of education, and these were run by Provincial Councils.[109] Other Copts attending government kuttābs were not so lucky; approximately four out of six hours per day were devoted to Islamic religious subjects.[110] When Christian instruction was offered, it was often taught by an ill-trained Coptic teacher or an equally ill-prepared priest. It annoyed the Copts that the government allocated funds for the training of Muslim religious teachers but would not do so for Christians, but this problem seemed secondary.[111] A more fundamental problem was that the Provincial Councils seemed to make so little effort to provide Christian instruction. Copts felt that this was distinctly unfair given that, in certain areas, they paid a high proportion of the tax which supported council education.[112] Some of the more radical Copts of 'Asyūṭ demanded a rebate of the school taxes Copts paid so that they could organize their own education.[113] Copts in Jirjā and elsewhere felt likewise.[114] In the late 1920s, some

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107. FO.141/675, 45/7/37.
108. The Copts believed that the government should pay the teacher. Misr 22 November 1949, p.3.
109. In 1911, for example, the 'Asyūṭ Provincial Council administered 79 kuttābs, nine of which were reserved for Copts.
110. Kyriakos Mikhail, Copts and Muslims under British Control (Port Washington, N.Y. 1971), pp.46, 53, 79.
111. Interview, Mirrīt Ghālī, 4 December 1978.
112. FO.371/1111, 5672/5672/16.
113. FO.371/1111, 10869/5672/16.
114. In 1911 a concerted protest by the Copts led Sir William Bull on 24 February to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons whether discrimination in the kuttāb system had received the government's attention. Ibid.

Copts were still complaining that their council failed to meet its responsibility to teach religion to Christian students.[115] Given that one-third of the children in government schools in 1927 were Copts, the numbers of Copts and the feasibility of providing them with Christian instruction was not the real problem.[116] The problem was, as Eldon Gorst noted in 1907, that there was considerable Muslim opposition to Christian education in schools.[117] In 1911 delegates at the Heliopolis Conference voted to oppose the teaching of Christianity in government schools.[118] A more important concern to many Muslims was the government's failure to provide adequate training in Islam.

In 1923 the Minister of Education expressed a desire to expand Islamic instruction in state schools.[119] The ʿulamā repeatedly demanded that a larger share of the curriculum be devoted to Islam and, by the 1930s, religion was a large part of the set programme in all government schools. At the highest level of pre-university training, 20 per cent of class time was devoted to Arabic and Islam.[120]

In 1921 the Ministry of Education agreed to provide Christian education in those primary schools enrolling ten Christian students.[121]

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115. Particularly in Qinā. Miṣr 16 and 23 February 1928, p.1.
116. These figures excluded kuttābs and madāris, religious schools connected to mosques: 58,557 Copts and 102,435 Muslims. The statistics are those of the Ministry of Education. Miṣr, 29 June 1929, p.1.
117. Gorst's Report on the Affairs of Egypt, 1907 (Accounts and Papers, C), Cd 3452.
118. Mikhail, Copts and Muslims, p.35.
119. Al-Waṭan, claiming a tie between religion, morals and progress, applauded the idea but asked that Christianity be taught to Christian students. 15 November 1923, p.1.
120. Until 1935, students in the fourth year of secondary school were exempt from religious classes. James Jankowski, Egypt's Young Rebels (Stanford 1975), p.2.
121. Kuttābs were eventually absorbed by elementary schools, which provided basic literacy training. Primary schools had a more elaborate curriculum and were intended for students who planned a longer education than most Egyptian parents could afford. Secondary school was open only to the graduates of primary school.

Complaints in the communal press suggest that this decision, like the one in 1907, was executed piecemeal, if at all. In 1925 'Ibrāhīm Taklā, the highest ranking Copt in the Ministry of Education, was put in charge of a committee developing a programme of Christian education for primary and secondary schools. Its writ did not include developing a programme for the more widely attended elementary schools.[122]

In 1927 a memorandum was submitted by the Coptic Orthodox, Coptic Catholic and Protestant churches to the Minister of Education, asking that the compulsory education bill, then in preparation, provide Christian instruction in all schools with ten Christian pupils. It appealed to the constitutional guarantee of equality and reminded the government that the Copts too paid taxes.[123]

In 1931 the Minister of Education, in announcing plans for compulsory elementary education legislation, stated that religious education would be mandatory for Muslims. It would not be provided for Christian students, but they could make their own arrangements for instruction to be given during the periods Islam was taught. Misr accused the then Prime Minister Sidqī of so resenting Coptic opposition to his regime that he was trying to weaken the community's morals by denying its children religious instruction.[124]

In 1933 the bill came before Parliament. Those who criticized its provisions wished to see the curriculum include more Islamic religious instruction and less general knowledge.[125] When the Coptic Senator ʿAbd Allah Simaika bravely asked that Christian education be provided, the Minister of Education objected, claiming that it was impossible for

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122. Misr, 1 October 1925, p.1.
123. FO.371/17302, J1941/1647/16.
124. Misr, 17 December 1931, p.1.
125. Alfred Yallouz, "Chronique législatif, 1921-3", L'Egypte Contemporaine 146-7 (1934), pp.126-8. FO.371/17302, J1647/1647/16.

a state with a constitutionally established religion to teach a second religion in its schools. This, of course, overlooked the fact that some government schools already offered Christian instruction and that there was a precedent for doing so. Coptic Senators planned to raise the issue again, but, in compliance with a royal request, did not.[126] Curiously the Majlis Millī and the Patriarch kept a closely guarded silence; that of the latter is almost certainly due to a fear of royal displeasure.

The law, when finally passed, did exempt non-Muslims from Islamic instruction,[127] which was designed to consume one-third of classroom hours. Even if Christian children absented themselves from school during those hours, they would still have been exposed to Islam in their Arabic lessons. In practice, however, social pressure apparently made it difficult for Christian parents to withdraw their children from Islamic instruction.[128]

The Residency concluded that the law was discriminatory.[129] Campbell, the Acting High Commissioner, spoke to the Minister of Education who agreed to allow Copts, chosen by the community, to teach religion in elementary schools. Furthermore, he promised that the Ministry would pay their salary. The Copts, not trusting the word of the Minister, asked for a formal Directive. Campbell, who felt that the King and not the Cabinet was the real problem, none the less asked

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126. FO.371/17302, J1647/1647/16.
127. See Article 11, Chamber Debates, "Taqrīr Lajnat al-Maʿārif ʿan Mashrūʿ Qānūn Khāṣ b-il-taʿlīm al-'Awwal", 58th session, 22 May 1933.
128. A. Morrison, "Christian Minorities in Egypt", December 1945, unpublished paper, Middle East Centre Library, Oxford University.
129. As a Foreign Office official noted, "The Case for intervention is reinforced by the injustice which would be shown by spending on Moslem religious education an increased amount of public money raised from taxes which are paid to some extent by Christians". FO.371/17203, J1647/1647/16.

the Acting Prime Minister about a Ministerial Decree.[130] Shafīq Pasha, who had already discussed the matter with a delegation of Coptic notables, reitereated the government's promise to provide Christian instruction. He felt that there would be too much Muslim opposition to a Ministerial Decree, just as there would have been had he tried to include it in the compulsory education bill.[131] He promised, however, to issue a circular to all Ministry offices calling for the implementation of Christian education in elementary schools.

The Foreign Office was disappointed with his proposal and so were the Copts.[132] ʿAbd Allah Simaika wished to move to amend the bill in the Senate but he failed to get the ten signatures required to begin the process.[133] The Patriarch still refused to enter the controversy, but the Majlis Millī was at least preparing to present its views in a petition.[134] In the autumn, the Ministry sent out a circular asking about the number of Christian students enrolled. The Ministry intended to make a decision after it obtained the responses, and the British decided to wait for that decision.

Unfortunately, the anti-missionary campaign that summer and the Caliphal ambitions of the King made it difficult for the government to take concrete action.[135] The first led to demands for a more

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130. The Foreign Office told Campbell that he could discuss the matter with the King if his Cabinet Ministers proved unhelpful.
131. FO.371/17302, J1727/1647/16.
132. FO.371/17302, J1941/1647/16.
133. There were more than ten Coptic Senators at this time.
134. The Majlis submitted the petition on 19 February 1934 and, in it, asked for six periods per week of Christian instruction in those schools with at least 15 Christian students enrolled. Misr, 2 April 1946, p.2.
135. FO.371/17976, J2067/7/16

thorough Islamic education in state schools.[136] The following year, some Muslim Deputies insisted during the debate on the Ministry of Education's budget that the programme of religious instruction was inadequate.[137] No Coptic Deputy spoke up but Misr, in making clear its dissatisfaction, commented that parliamentary representatives were supposed to represent the whole nation and not only its Muslim component.[138] The Copts kept up their pressure and, with strong Residency support which was given at Foreign Office insistence, they made some progress in 1935. They obtained an exemption for non-Muslim primary students from Qur'ān memorization.[139] The Minister of Education, al-Hilālī, was willing to fund Christian education at the elementary level but not in school buildings. He was even willing to defray the cost of renting sites, should some churches, the logical places for such instruction, be too far from schools. Coptic opinion divided on this offer: some insisted that the government must supply both premises and teachers, and others were willing to accept government funds and organize the instruction themselves. The former group may have been anxious to keep religious instruction out of the hands of the ill-educated clergy; otherwise, they ran the risk of increasing the latter's

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136. Al-Siyāsa, 26 June 1933, p.1. In 1930 the Young Men's Muslim Association, concerned about missionary activity, deemed that religious instruction should be a part of the general school curricula; and it reprimanded the Minister of Education for paying too little attention to religious instruction. G. Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia", in Whither Islam?, ed. H.A.R. Gibb (London 1932), pp.130-7, 149.
137. Egyptian Gazette, 15 March 1934, p.5.
138. Miṣr, 13 March 1934, p.1.
139. It is not clear that this was enforced. In December 1936 the Ministry of Education said that the time was unripe for the introduction of this change. FO.141/675, 45/2 & 3/37.

power. The second, more pragmatic group saw the advantage of the community, rather than the government, having control of religious instruction. The Patriarch was not blind to this; al-Hilālī claimed to have obtained his assent. Murqus Simaika, however, noted that the Patriarch was so timid and fearful of offending the King that the community could count on him for little help in its battles with the government. The Majlis Millī was less amenable to the scheme than the Patriarch and the Residency was drawn into mediating between the government and the Copts, a task it never enjoyed.[140] Christian instruction this time seems to have been sacrificed on the altar of the Copts' inability to agree among themselves and their reluctance to compromise with the government.

The tide was, in any case, running the other way; suddenly the Copts found that the fight for an exemption from Islamic instruction was more serious than that for the institution of Christian instruction. In 1936 a Qur'ānic exam was made mandatory for all students in the first two years of secondary school. Eventually the Patriarch requested an exemption for Coptic students; and the Wafd, in power in 1937, agreed. It was a decision the party may well have regretted because it raised an unexpected degree of opposition.[141] 'Azharis, others of similar religious ilk and the Wafd's political opponents objected to the exemption; one petition, from the Central Committee of Young Muslim Societies, is typical.

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140. FO.371/19082, J515/153/16; J1548/153/16; J3022/153/16.
141. Al-Balāgh, 8 March 1937, PPF; al-Jihād, 5 February 1937, PPF.

> The Arabic Language is the official language of the state and the Qur'ān is the noblest expression of this language. It is truly astonishing that a group of the sons of the nation is to be deprived from tasting the literature of the official language of the country....Unity of teaching is the foundation of the unity of the nation. We cannot have one set of students taught one thing and another set something else.[142]

That same month, a group of law students advocated the introduction of compulsory religiou instruction at the University.[143] Al-'Azhar was jubilant, and Shaikh al-Marāghī expressed his approval to senior university officials.[144] The Wafdist al-Miṣri also backed the idea, but then changed its mind. Muhammad al-ʿAshmawī, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Education, told the press that students came to the University so well instructed in Islam that further teaching was unnecessary.[145] Such comments disrupted class at al-'Azhar and sent student delegations to call on university deans.

A few months later, this pressure pushed the Wafd into showing some support for Islamic religious instruction. It developed a list of recommendations which were supported by the Muslim Brethren and included the following: (1) setting a religious exam for students in the final two years of secondary school; (2) building a mosque in every school and appointing one of the teachers to lead prayers; (3) requiring a sermon every day before the noon prayer, and (4) establishing a religious library in every school.[146]

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142. Al-Balāgh, 8 March 1937, PPF. al-Jihād, 5 February 1937, PPF
143. Al-Miṣri, 7 March 1937, PPF.
144. Al-Ahrām, 8 March 1937, PPF.
145. Al-Miṣri, 12 March 1937, PPF. Miṣr attributed government resistance to the fact that the government was then negotiating the abolition of the capitulations and wanted to project a secular image. Miṣr, 15 March 1937, p.1.
146. Al-Miṣri, 18 July and 12 August 1937, PPF. At this time pressure was also being put on parents sending their children to missionary schools. After British intervention, the government agreed to allow Muslim children to attend such schools if their parents could prove that they were receiving private religious instruction. In some places, Coptic parents were fined for sending their children to missionary schools instead of state schools. FO.371/20914, J3162/369/16; J2447/369/16; J2253/369/16; FO.141/675, 45/5 & 6/37.

As the Wafd learned, religious education could be a potent political weapon. In September 1937, the opposition press reported that the government was developing a programme of Christian religious instruction for state primary and secondary schools.[147] The Wafd was obliged to deny the report,[148] as it was the following year's attack on Makram and al-Nahhās for opposing Islamic religious instruction in schools.[149]

The pressure for more and more elaborate programmes of Islamic religious instruction was maintained throughout the 1940s. 'Azharis,[150] the Muslim Brethren and the Young Men's Muslim Association[151] were particularly troublesome on this issue. It became increasingly difficult for an incumbent government to reject such demands, let alone meet those of the Copts. The Ministry eventually acquired extensive supervisory powers, including approval of curricula and texts, over foreign and private schools; and it obliged them to teach their Muslim students about Islam.[152] Coptic schools accepted Muslim students, and it was not always easy for them to comply with the new regulations.

From 1946 the Copts were particularly vehement about the need for Christian religious education, an unsurprising response to the increased degree of Muslim pressure. The Coptic Lay Council was particularly vigorous

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147. Al-Balāgh, 25 September 1937, PPF.
148. Al-Miṣri, 26 September 1937, PPF.
149. Al-Kashkūl, 11 February 1938, pp.34-5.
150. FO.371/31569, J1226/38/16; Egyptian Gazette, 25 February 1947, p.3.
151. DW, HBM (QM): Security Reports, 1938; Miṣr, 15 April 1940, p.1.
152. La Bourse Egyptienne, 23 September 1943, p.3. In 1948 the Ministry demanded that private schools teach the same subjects with the same materials as government schools. Copts complained that some of the materials used in state schools were anti-Christian and that their authors were discriminated against in making up the reading lists. Christian schools were obliged to provide Muslim students with a place to pray even if the school met in a church and inspectors in some area forced the schools to close on Friday. Georgie Hyde, Education in Modern Egypt (London 1978), p.168; Mīkhā'Īl, Farriq Tasud, pp.16, 23, 24; and Misr, 15 April 1948, p.1.

in this debate, as were Misr and al-Manāra al-Misriyya. Misr sometimes asked that a proportion of the education budget equal to the Coptic percentage of the population be devoted to Christian education and, at other times, only asked the government to help the Copts build their own schools. From 1949, the Copts used Law No.10 (1949), which guaranteed equal education for all Egyptians regardless of creed, to support their demand for religious instruction. In 1949 the Ministry considered making Christianity an examination subject for Christian students,[153] and both the Majlis Millī and the Patriarch pushed hard for it. A committee of Coptic educators was appointed to develop a programme, and the Patriarch was asked to submit a report with his ideas. The matter went no further because the Cabinet then fell.

The Copts hoped that the new Wafd Cabinet would implement the programme. In February 1951, the Patriarch sent the Minister a note of inquiry, but not until the end of the year did the Minister of Education announce that Christian students would be taught the principles of their religion.[154] The fall of the monarchy seven months later prevented the plan's implementation in the next school year; but, if it had not, something else surely would have.

No easy generalizations can be made about which government schools offered Christian instruction. It was not available in elementary schools but seems sometimes to have been taught in primary and secondary school. It was an unsystematic arrangement which was made less acceptable by the fact that the ease in obtaining exemptions for Christian children from Islamic classes probably varied; much depended

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153. Misr, 2 July 1949, p.1.
154. Misr, 1 December 1951, p.3.

on local school and Ministry authorities. It was difficult for any Ministry, Wafdist or otherwise, to respond positively to Coptic demands for equality in the provision of religious education. Although the Wafd was accused by its opponents of being "soft" on the issue of Christian instruction, with the one exception of the Wafd promise to implement Christian instruction in 1951, the Copts came closest to their goal in 1935 and 1949, both years of non-Wafd government. Even Cabinet approval of Christian exemptions from lessons or exams which were overtly Islamic was problematic. Part of the difficulty was that the Muslims who were inclined to be the most vocal on the issue of Islamic religious instruction probably were also the ones who were the least inclined to grant Copts true equality. The state could hardly fulfil its obligations to Islam by propagating Christianity, even among Christians.

B. The Issue of State Control

The state, in this period, was making greater demands on its citizens and was increasingly able to affect their lives. Its power over Muslims and Copts grew and it extended its authority into those areas where clerical competence had prevailed. Muslims found the state's tightening grasp less disturbing than did Copts, for they had always had a closer relationship with the state. The Copts reacted strongly when the government attempted to encroach on their traditional autonomy; some who supported integration in the political sphere fought the government in this other area. Paradoxically, they wanted both political equality and special protection. The road to integration was, at best, a long and difficult one; and it was not unwise of them to want some protection along the way. As long as

the constitution and Islam imposed certain duties on the state, many Copts believed that the community had a right to protect its religion and culture. Should they relinquish that autonomy, they had no guarantee that the government would establish an appropriate secular alternative for both Muslims and Copts. The Copts were particularly sensitive on two subjects, personal status jurisdiction and government restrictions on their freedom of worship. If they were to survive as a community in a Muslim-dominated state, it was vital to protect their autonomy in the first and their freedom from restrictions in the second.

1. Personal Status Jurisdiction

Non-Muslims traditionally followed the prescriptions of their own religion and were bound by Islamic law in only a few cases.[155] There were separate personal status courts for the fourteen non-Muslim religious communities in Egypt. Some, including those of the three Coptic sects, were formally recognized by the government; others were unrecognized but tolerated. This system of multiple jurisdictions was antiquated, inefficient and lacking in uniformity.[156] The government had no control over millet court verdicts but was theoretically responsible for the execution of those verdicts in those communities it had recognized. As the government sometimes declined to accept this responsibility,[157] the communal courts ultimately were dependent on whatever religious sanctions the church could impose on a fractious

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155. Such cases involved Muslims, members of different millets, inheritance, or a non-Muslim's appeal to a Muslim court in the hope of obtaining a favourable verdict. Inheritance traditionally followed Islamic law, applied by the millet courts, unless the heirs privately agreed to a different division of the property. Most Christian churches did not have a special canon law relating to inheritance, but sometimes had certain preferences. For example, the Coptic Orthodox preferred to award siblings more equal shares than did Muslims. See al-Khulāṣa al-Qānūniyya fī al-'Aḥwāl al-Shakhṣiyya Li Kanīsa al-'Aqbāṭ al-'Urthūdhuksiyya (Cairo 1923), p.327.
156. FO.371/17976, J2067/7/16/
157. Kosroff Zohrab, "Etude sur les privilèges de Patriarcats", L'Egypte Contemporaine 112 (1929), p.155.

litigant. There were other serious problems. The appointment of judges was arbitrary, and they were sometimes unqualified; only the Orthodox Copts maintained a high standard in lay appointments.[158] No court protected against conflicts of interest, and the Coptic Orthodox community was one of the few whose courts followed a rule of procedure. The government, in the hope of abolishing inconsistencies within and between the millets, wanted one rule of procedure for all the millets; it also wished to establish a uniform scale of fees. Both would also have made government oversight easier.

Between 1918 and 1956, when the millet courts were abolished, the government made repeated attempts to reform this system. Every attempt, however sensible, and however limited, was fought by the Coptic community on the grounds that reform "represented the thin end of a wedge" directed at the abolition of the Majlis Millīs and their control over communal revenues.[159] Personal status jurisdiction was one of the few issues able to spark some measure of agreement among the Majlis Millī, the clergy and the Coptic press and, by the 1940s, it had even brought together the normally hostile Christian communities. There were some Christians, however, who wanted reform; they realized the judicial system's corruption and inefficiency and were willing to see an increase in government power over the community because they had abandoned hope that the community would reform itself. When Senator Alfred Shammās tabled a motion to make non-Muslim marriage a civil contract, it was to overcome evils in the millet system.[160] He believed that the government

158. Etienne de Szazy, "Le Status Personnel des non-Musulmans en Egypte et sa reforme", L'Egypte Contemporaine 184 (1939), p.361.
159. FO.371/16118, J1719/194/16.
160. In his plan, the Sharīʿa courts, with a non-Muslim added to the bench, had jurisdiction over the validity of marriage. Senate Debates, 23 August 1926; Egyptian Gazette, 28 August 1926, p.4.

would be less arbitrary in its judicial behaviour than the communal courts, although on what grounds is not clear. Some Copts supported personal status reforms because they wished to see a decrease in the Majlis Millī's power and, in some cases possibly, a corresponding increase in their own. Qalīnī Fahmī, for example, suggested to the Palace in 1926 that personal status matters be taken over by the government, a plan he was still advocating in the 1940s. He described the lay councils as small governments whose existence was not in line with the spirit of the constitution.[161]

The British followed the government's attempts at reform closely and their help was often solicited by minorities. The Foreign Office was more likely to disapprove of draft legislation than the Residency; this may have been due to their sensitivity to the influence of the Anglican church in parliament. At one stage, however, the Foreign Office inexplicably reversed its stand and openly pushed for reform.

The first encroachment on the millet courts was made in the 19th century with the establishment of the Court of Wards (Majlis al-Hasbī). The court was designed to administer the property of minors and the incompetent. This was not a religious function, and the Majlis was not really a religious court. However, there was no civil code and so the court applied Sharīʿa law whenever possible. Many Copts, including members of the Lay Council, did not approve of the Court of Wards or a 1925 law increasing its powers. They were not comforted by the fact that the latter law stipulated that a member of the appropriate millet join the bench in non-Muslim cases in place of the

161. CCEH, ʿAbdīn Palace Index, Index on the Copts, No.4039.

usual Sharī a Judge.[162] The Majlis Millī regarded the Hasbī courts as Islamic courts and believed that if certain family questions were secular, they should be under the jurisdiction of the Native Courts. Misr and al-Watan also opposed the 1925 law.[163] A few Copts, feeling that the measure provided more protection to wards than did the chaotic organization of Majlis Millī courts, approved it. The British did not find the 1925 law threatening to Coptic interests, although three years earlier M.S. Amos advocated British intervention to prevent a similar reform if the minorities opposed it.[164] The Hasbī Court was again strengthened by royal decree in 1929.

Numerous committees discussed the reform of the entire court system but, as ʿAlī Māhir noted in 1936, their discussions bore little fruit.[165] One committee, meeting in 1920-1, conceded that the state was unable to legislate a personal status code for all Egyptians and must find another solution to the contradictions. Acordingly, this committee outlined rules of competence to determine jurisdiction. The committee wanted to create a special court to which cases involving a conflict of competence or verdict could be referred.[166] However, the draft law was shelved, as was a similar project drawn up in 1923.[167]

The confusion in judicial prerogatives resulted in many complaints from non-Muslims, and the Senate Finance Committee in 1927 asked the

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162. 'Aḥmad Muḥammad Ḥassan Bey and Isador Feldman, Majmūʿa al-Qawānīn w-al-Lawā'ih, II (Cairo 1926), p.1088. Decree Law of 13 October 1925.
163. Al-Waṭan complained that the government had no right to put into effect such a scheme until Parliament was in session. See al-Watan 15 July 1925, p.2 and 11 August 1925, p.1.
164. FO.141/451, 14544/1/22.
165. Maḥmūd ʿAzmī, al-'Ayyām al-Mi'a (Cairo 1939), p.51.
166. DW, ʿAbdīn Palace Archives, Tawā'if wa Gamʿiyāt Dīniyya 2. Report dated 1 May 1921.
167. Egyptian Gazette, 2 March 1923, p.6. Both Committees had a Coptic representative in Sidarus Sesostris, later a diplomat.

Minister of Justice to study the matter.[168] The Ministry, in turn, asked non-Muslims to present their ideas on the unification of millet jurisdiction. The latter responded that, due to variations in canon law, it would be impossible to draft one code which would satisfy all communities; many mentioned the difference in divorce laws as problematic. Some also insisted that only their clergy could alter canon law. Both Misr and al-Watan opposed new legislation.[169]

In 1931 the Minister of Justice, ʿAlī Māhir, revived the 1923 plan.[170] The Copts were annoyed that he chose to take a sounding of minority opinion in the summer when few communal leaders were available. Misr and al-Watan voiced their opposition and their resentment that neither the Patriarch nor the Majlis Millī had acted with speed or firmness.[171] The Majlis finally published in November a brochure claiming communal privilege in all matters of personal status.[172]

Because of this opposition, the Cabinet in December appointed a special advisory committee, including non-Muslims, to help the Ministry.[173] The Ministry hoped to attach a Christian personal status court to each native Court of the First Instance. Its bench would be drawn partly from the Native Courts and would include two lay members who shared the religion of the disputants. A similar Appeals Court would be established. The Ministry here was trying to regularize the application of the law and not produce a new civil code. If the parties

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168. Senate Debates, 48th Session, 6 June 1927. Misr accused the government of tampering with religious freedom.
169. Misr, 25 February 1928, p.3. See also FO. 407/206, J519/18/16 (Jan.).
170. ʿAlī Māhir had a general interest in reforms which would lead to greater efficiency and greater state control. He had a special interest in the badly organized Majlis al-Ḥasbī having been its director of administration until 1918.
171. Misr, 14 October 1931, p.6.
172. FO.141/755, 124/9/33.
173. It could only advise and not veto. FO.141/566, 78/20/34.

were Orthodox and belonged to a community with a recognized code of law, they would be justiciable under Coptic Orthodox law, and, if Catholic, under Catholic canon law. If the disputants were of different sects, then lex contractus or the canon law which validated the marriage would apply, except when one party had converted to Islam.[174] This latter point met an important Coptic demand. Christians desiring a divorce frequently converted to a different Christian sect so that they could take their case to an Islamic court.

Many in the Residency, including the High Commissioner, thought that the proposals, in laicizing non-Muslim jurisdiction only, were unfair.[175] There was no provision for clerical representation on the bench and, theoretically, Muslims could be appointed judges. A more serious problem was that the reform entailed considerable loss of power to the Lay Councils and probably foreshadowed their eventual demise. Booth, the Judicial Adviser, did see some good in the reform and felt that Christian religious sensibilities, given the narrower scope of issues considered religious in Christianity would be less offended by the project than Muslim feeling in a similar instance.[176]

Booth's reasoning was not shared by Egyptian Christians. Some, along with the Protestant Majlis Millī, insisted that the old system functioned perfectly well and did not require reform. One delegation of Copts told a member of Booth's staff that matters reserved for the Sharīʿa courts must also be set aside for the communal courts.[177] Those Copts on the government committee showed themselves no more

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174. FO.141/488, 94/1/32.
175. Of course, the Sharīʿa courts were going to lose jurisdiction in cases involving disputants of differing millets.
176. FO.141/488, 94/2/32.
177. FO.141/488, 94/12/32.

amenable to the reform. They admitted the necessity of uniform procedure and the desirability of depositing with the Ministry the code of laws of each community, but they refused to agree to more radical changes.[178] Obviously, their loss of power vis-à-vis the government disturbed the Copts more than long-time abuses in the system.

The Ministry took these strong feelings into account and drafted concessionary legislation. Communal courts were not to be amalgamated or reduced in number, but their competence was to be restricted and they were to be brought into a closer relationship with the Ministry of Justice.[179] Judges were to be approved by the Ministry, and their verdicts pronounced in the name of the King. Although a compromise, this still increased government power at the expense of the communal courts. The Copts objected to this scheme, and even Smart feared that it opened the door to the kind of government conduct witnessed in the 1928 Patriarchal election.[180] Both he and the Foreign Office concluded that as long as there were special courts for Muslims, there must be parallel courts for non-Muslims.[181]

In discussing the appropriate British response, Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Maurice Peterson in the Foreign Office believed that intervention could be justified by the third Reserved Point because, as Dilke noted, "the liberties of the Copts were being infringed and....the constitution which we had supposed ensured sufficient protection was being broken..."[182] Peterson instructed an unhappy Loraine to object if the government persisted with the legislation. Loraine agreed with Booth that the government's desire to supervise millet courts was

178. FO.141/488, 94/8/32.
179. FO.141/488, 94/9/32.
180. FO.141/488, 94/8/32.
181. FO.141/488, 94/11/32.
182. FO.371/16117, J1263/171/16.

not unreasonable, although he saw Smart's point that the government could approve judges with strong Patriarchal sympathies, thereby strengthening the hand of the clerical party.[183] Booth approved the legislation because both inheritance and cases involving disputants of different religions would go to the Native Courts. Although this was not quite what the Copts wanted, it was a concession which involved some loss of power to the Sharīʿa courts.[184]

Nothing happened until the next year when the Foreign Office, suddenly and inexplicably, instructed the Residency to see that the reform was not buried forever in the Ministry of Justice.[185] Arthur Yencken, the Acting High Commissioner, noted his opinion that, due to Coptic opposition, it was enough for the British to acquiesce to the legislation without actively promoting it.[186] Peterson agreed to a temporary postponement only. Despite obvious procrastination, little pressure was applied to the government before it fell in November.[187]

ʿAlī Māhir returned to the reform when he became Prime Minister in 1936. A new draft was prepared and the Council of Ministers approved it in May. Some changes were made to satisfy the British, but these did not in any way placate the minorities. Still, having settled British, if not Coptic objections, the government declared the project law. ʿAlī Māhir, in fact, enacted a considerable number of laws by royal decree during his short interim Ministry. The succeeding Wafdist

183. FO.407/215 No.67, Sir P. Loraine to Sir J. Simon, 10 June 1932. For a copy of the draft law, see FO.141/488, 94/9/32.
184. The Minister of Justice told Booth that he had received sharp protests from Muslims because of this. FO.371/16118, J1719/194/16.
185. FO.141/566, 78/2/34.
186. FO.141/566, 78/1/34.
187. FO.141/566, 78/10/34.

Cabinet declared these enactments the proper business of Parliament and abrogated most of them, including the personal status law. The British did not protest, either because they had lost interest in the reform or because, following the strict letter of the 1936 treaty, it was none of their affair.

In 1944 the government was once again considering reform. Rumour and speculation ran riot. The Copts were already alarmed due to the enactment of a law formally obliging non-Muslims to follow Islamic inheritance laws. When the bill came up for debate in the Chamber, three Coptic deputies argued for its postponement until the planned personal status law could be drafted. Their tactic failed and the law passed, seemingly without Coptic opposition to the substance of the bill.[188]

With regard to its personal status legislation, this government made a greater effort to consult minority opinion than had ᶜAlī Māhir in 1936. The Minister of Justice, Ṣabrī 'Abū ᶜAlam, received many representations from communal leaders and met with Fahmī Wīṣā, Minister of Civil Defence, and Kāmil Ṣidqī, an ex-Minister.[189] As a result of these meetings, minor changes were made in the government's draft. Minorities still insisted on lex contractus; but the government, handicapped by a parliament with which ᶜAlī Māhir had not had to deal, was not amenable on this point.[190] In mid-September, 'Abū ᶜAlam met with the press to explain that the government's intention was to abolish discrepancies in jurisdiction and procedure and not

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188. Chamber Debates, sixteenth session, 8 March 1944.
189. Egyptian Gazette, 6 September 1944, p.3.
190. Ṣabrī 'Abū ᶜAlam was rumoured to be seeking the opinion of the Mufti of Egypt on this idea of lex contractus. Egyptian Gazette, 8 September 1944, p.3.

alter canon law.[191] Whatever its purpose, the legislation collapsed with the fall of the al-Nahḥās government.

Both the Patriarch and the Orthodoxy Majlis Millī made their objections known to the next Cabinet so the new Minister of Justice, Ḥāfiz Ramadān, announced that yet another committee would be formed to examine the subject.

The Committee of Liaison, founded to represent the various Christian sects and to defend religious liberty, met to co-ordinate non-Muslim opposition to the new draft.[192] Sābā Ḥabashī, who was in close touch with this committee, met with the Ministers of Social and Foreign Affairs during the summer and emphasized the importance of including lex contractus. The Committee of Liaison, however, decided that draft legislation would be unacceptable whatever modifications were made in it. Wheeling in the big guns, the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch was persuaded to lead the opposition to the bill, and the Palace was besieged with petitions claiming that the reform violated the essence of the Christian religion.[193] The Senate, without any real discussion, voted to send the bill back to Committee.[194]

The millets wanted the bill withdrawn altogether and, to this purpose, showed a "unity of view and action" never before achieved.[195] In January the Prime Minister, in a rare meeting with the Coptic

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191. FO.371/41318, J3444/14/16.
192. The committee had the backing of the Christian millets and sought the support of the two Jewish communities. FO.141/1159, 73/41/46.
193. One petition was from 'Ibrāhīm Lūqā. DW, ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives. Tawā'if Dīniyya.1, No.29, Petition to the head of the Royal Diwan.
194. Senators Tawfīq and Wahīb Dūs played a role in postponing debate on the bill several times and finally in returning it to committee. Senator Sābā Ḥabashī, despite his concern, made no visible contribution to this discussion. The merits of the legislation were not discussed. Senate Debates, 23 December 1946, twenty-third session.
195. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, letter from Ambassador Gilbert Arvengas to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Bidault, No.248, 21 February 1948.

Patriarch, discussed millet demands. The Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Patriarchs and the Grand Rabbi of Alexandria registered formal complaints. In Cairo, a protest meeting was held and the government's action characterized as a coup d'état.[196] A minor victory was achieved when a delegation meeting with the King's Secretary was told to prepare a report which could serve as the basis of new draft legislation.

The British Embassy, whose help was sought by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, declined to intervene. Characteristic of British irritation was the opinion of one official who noted that reform had been discussed for 16 years and that a new development was always "just around the corner".[197] Although the Embassy continued to follow events, it did not confide any opinion, private or official, to the Egyptian government after the 1936 treaty. It was not a matter which impinged on critical British interests.

In June a deputation called on the Prime Minister and the President of the Senate to present a counterdraft. The Senate Judiciary Committee issued its plan, which French Embassy officials described as making substantial concessions at the end of the month. One such gain was the awarding of competence in cases in which one party had converted to Islam to the Native Courts. In addition, this draft, unlike its predecessor in 1932, prohibited Muslims from sitting on the bench of the non-Muslim appeals courts, and it also provided for clerical representation.[198] None the less, opposition was so strong that the government was forced to withdraw the bill from parliament. Elections

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196. FO.371/63029, J1074/152/16.
197. FO.141/1159, 73/24/47,
198. In addition, Article 12 legitimized the view of those non-Muslims who saw marriage as a religious bond and were opposed to making it a civil contract by stipulating that marriages must first be sanctioned by the appropriate religious authority and then registered with the government. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, "Coptic Catholics", No.1447.

and a new Wafd Cabinet which sensibly avoided this troublesome issue brought the saga to an end.

In conclusion, the Copts, with some British backing as well as hindrance, were able to block any major reform in non-Muslim personal status jurisdiction. The government, at least in this one area, became increasingly willing to make concessions to communal desiderata; while the Copts, paradoxically, became increasingly resistant to any changes.

No doubt many politicians would have liked to create an entirely secular court system, under complete government control; but the system of multiple jurisdictions they inherited, partly Islamic and partly Western in inspiration, must have seemed frustratingly impervious to change. The attempt to reform non-Muslim personal status jurisdiction was not simply a matter of a well-meaning Muslim government trying to improve a chaotic and sometimes corrupt court system, but nor was it entirely an attempt by the government to gain power at the expense of its religious minorities. The government was also interested in reforming Muslim family law and its administration.[199] Recognizing the likelihood of an unfavourable public reaction, its attempts to do so were less energetic and radical than attempts to reform non-Muslim courts. Government reformers perhaps felt that it was more feasible, given the weakness of the millets and the fact that their religions did not specify such a detailed family law, to begin a general legal reform with their courts. They were wrong and eventually discovered that the changes they could effect in this area were hardly more far-reaching

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199. In 1926-27 proposals for the revision of Islamic personal status jurisdiction and the abolition of private endowments were presented to the Chamber. Similar suggestions were made from time to time. FO.407/205, No.18. Mr. Henderson to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 8 September 1927.

than those they could make in the Islamic legal system. The government was sometimes lax in consulting minority opinion[200] and was not entirely unwilling to impose reform by fiat. That it met with such stiff opposition was as much due to the minorities' unwillingness to lose more power over their communal affairs to a government whose secularism was suspect as it was to a desire to hold fast to religion. Most Copts, even some of those interested in internal reform, preferred to endure the abuses of the old system rather than relinquish communal control. No doubt they were also aware that a government-imposed reform would not necessarily guarantee efficiency or honesty, but it is also true that there was no genuinely strong movement within the community to correct the abuses inherent in personal status jurisdiction.

Non-Wafdist governments, which so often manipulated Muslim religious sentiment for political gain, were much more willing to reform non-Muslim personal status jurisdiction than the Wafd. Non-Wafdist parties had, or felt themselves to have, little significant Coptic support; the political risks entailed in reform were not that great. For the Wafd, however, the political risks were considerable, and the social benefits to be derived from any such reform could not offset them. The only serious attempt made by a Wafd government to deal with the problem was in 1944, after Makram ʿUbaid and several other Copts left the party. This attempt is curious because the Wafd then was anxious to retain some of its traditional Coptic support, although it does not automatically follow from ʿUbaid's break that Coptic backing for the Wafd had completely collapsed. However, there were fewer Copts in the party to argue against personal status reforms.

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200. Non-Muslims were sometimes asked to give an opinion after and not before a draft had been prepared.

2. Government limitations on the freedom of belief

Traditionally, churches could be built only with the permission of the government; the government, however, was often loth to grant this permission. The restrictions were manifold: churches could not be built near a mosque in or in a Muslim area if the inhabitants objected, or if the government decided that an adequate number of churches already existed in the area. Although permits fell within the purview of the Ministry of the Interior, if the church was too near a public building, a bank of the Nile or an irrigation canal, the appropriate Ministry had first to approve the proposed construction. One Coptic society in Kafr al-Shaikh, after waiting four years for permission to build a church on land the state had sold to it for that purpose, was told by the government that there were too few Copts in the area to justify a new church. It was said also that the planned church was too close to Kafr al-Shaikh town and would somehow threaten public security.[201] This example does not seem atypical; sometimes Copts waited as long as ten years only to be denied a permit.[202] What often seems to have happened was that no sooner was a site chosen and a permit requested than a mosque was built nearby in order to defeat the petition.[203] In 1949 a Ministry of Social Affairs directive seems to have made permission even more difficult to acquire,[204] and in 1951 Misr expressed dismay because, at a time when many mosques were being built in heavily Coptic Shubrā, it was so difficult to build churches

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201. Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud, pp.83-4, 87.
202. In 1952, Copts in Sūhāj had waited seven years for a permit. The Patriarch had even made a fruitless trip to see the Minister of the Interior on their behalf. Misr, 29 December 1951, p.1.
203. Misr, 5 August 1950, p.1; Y. Masriya, "A Christian Minority: The Copts in Egypt", in Case Studies in Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms IV (The Hague 1976), p.79.
204. This decision applied to churches built with money collected from the public through donations or subscriptions, and its intent seems to have been to protect the subscribers. Misr, 28 June 1949, p.3.

in such quarters. It was also difficult to obtain permits to repair existing churches.[205]

The Copts correctly construed the difficulty in building churches as an illegal restriction on the constitutional guarantee of freedom of worship. Miṣr frequently complained about the problem.[206] In 1950, 'Ibrāhīm Lūqā wrote an open letter to the Minister of the Interior asking him to ease restrictions, and the following year the Patriarch wrote to the Prime Minister and asked him to abolish them.[207]

Two minor problems which bothered Copts were the functional ban on ringing church bells and the conscription of Coptic theological students in the 1950s. A more serious inequity was the impossibility of broadcasting Coptic religious programmes and services on state radio when much of the air-time was taken up with Islamic religious broadcasts. Originally, the Copts were refused permission to broadcast on the grounds that they would do so in Coptic, and foreign languages were not allowed. Copts frequently asked for this prohibition to be lifted, but were unsuccessful.[208] Only once during Coptic Christmas in 1951 were the Copts permitted to broadcast a religious service.[209]

C. One Response to Pressure: Conversion

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, due to the pressures put on the Copts and the difficulties placed in their way, it was part of the state's task to encourage conversion to Islam. In centuries

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205. Miṣr, 10 January 1950, p.3.
206. See Miṣr, 15 May 1936, p.1; 4 August 1951, p.1.
207. Miṣr, 10 January 1950, p.3; 18 January 1951, p.1; 28 March 1951, p.1.
208. See Miṣr, 17 March 1938, p.1; French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, "Coptic Catholics" no.661, M. Gilbert Arvengas to M. Georges Bidault, 29 April 1948; Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud, p.310.
209. See Miṣr, 2 January 1951, p.1; 15 January 1951, p.1.

past, the state may have been predominantly interested in the jizya tax but, in this century, homogeneity was increasingly important. Given the disadvantages of being Christian in this society, surprisingly few Copts seem to have converted; most estimates range from a few hundred to less than a thousand per year. These estimates may not, however, have accurately reflected rural conversions; isolated villagers may have been subject to a coercion that urban Copts either did not encounter or could more easily resist.[210] Judging from the number of articles published in Miṣr and al-Manāra al-Miṣriya, concern about the conversion rate became more acute in the mid-1940s. Salāma Mūsā, commenting on the case of a young Copt who had joined the Muslim Brethren, accused the Brethren of mounting a campaign to convert Copts.[211] The French Embassy reported that Brethren zealots were abducting young Christian girls, marrying them and then forcing them to convert to Islam.[212]

The Islamic religious establishment seems to have overlooked such abuses. They were required to ensure that the conversion was sincere, but this was an empty formality; Copts were not turned away.[213] Copts, in fact, converted for a variety of practical reasons; among them to find work, escape discrimination and obtain divorce.[214] No stigma was attached to being an ex-Christian. Some newspapers printed articles about converts who had been hired by the government, and Muslim societies published figures showing the sums spent to help new

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210. One Copt wrote to Miṣr that he had been forced to convert. Miṣr, 23 June 1951, p.1.
211. Miṣr, 18 April 1946, p.1.
212. The Embassy noted that conversions were more numerous. French Embassy Archives, Box 144, File 31/2, Situation de la Communauté Copte en Egypte, 24 January 1948.
213. Miṣr, 17 May 1947, p.3.
214. For examples of court cases, see Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud, pp.150-64.

converts.[215] Sometimes a convert later wished to return to the Christian fold, but the law on apostacy forbade this.[216] Copts could not and did not demand that conversion to Islam be prohibited, but they did want to make it more difficult.

D. Summary

Equality was clearly the key in all of this as far as the Copts, and to an extent the British, were concerned. The constitution established an ideal which they looked to meet in practice but which was impossible to realize. If Muslims had separate religious courts, the Copts believed that they were entitled to them as well. If mosques could go up at will, then the construction of churches ought to be equally easy. All citizens ought to have equal access to the civil service and indeed to all jobs. The communal press was the most vehement advocate of equality in Egypt and was sometimes able to force official Coptic representatives to take a stand in defence of sectarian interests. Both Coptic clergy and politicians could be woefully unresponsive to communal desires. They did little to combat discrimination in employment, but this was a fuzzy area in which it was easy to prove discrimination overall but difficult to substantiate in the particular. There was, in any case, no mechanism for correcting the problem. The constitution guaranteed equality, but the apparatus for enforcing it did not really exist. There was an almost equal lack of response, at least until the 1940s, on the issue of Christian religious education. This was less

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215. Rev. Qummus Sergius, "Why Copts become Moslems?", The Moslem World 26 (1936), p.377.
216. Miṣr, 15 February 1951, p.1.

a matter of defending an existing preserve than fulfilling a new goal engendered by the notion of equality. The issue of reforming personal status jurisdiction drew by far the most strenuous protests, although Coptic political representatives again were less than stalwart in their defence. The Lay Council and the clergy, on the other hand, had vested interests at stake and were not about to relinquish them without a struggle. Their success in this, the most traditional and hallowed preserve of the Copts, was striking. If the number of complaints voiced can be used as a measure, the problem of building churches became more acute in the 1940s. Perhaps the government found it more difficult to grant permits in the face of so much Islamic religious pressure. It may also be the case that the Coptic press, in the early years of the monarchy when chance of obtaining equality appeared great, was less interested in this issue; later, when the Copts felt threatened on all sides, the problem of building permits seemed increasingly relevant to their unfortunate situation. It is interesting to note how very much more active the Patriarch became in his flock's defence in the late 1940s. This may have been less due to conviction than the pressures placed on him by the other millets and his own community.

It is not entirely clear that the government responded to this charged atmosphere by increasing discrimination and by making greater attempts to deprive the community of its jurisdiction in certain areas. Certainly, Copts felt that the government was treating non-Muslims more harshly, although perhaps the government merely struggled to maintain traditional relationships. However, its attempts to increase its power and strengthen its own machinery meant that there was increasingly less room for individual action and responsibility for all.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

A. The Religious Idiom and Party Politics

The use of religious issues and sentiments became a feature of political discourse in this period. There were those who felt that this was only right and proper, that Islam required political decisions to accord with its dictates. Others were uncomfortable with this stance but still made political use of religion because they knew it was the easiest way to reach the masses. Still others, secularists of a more principled type, saw this as discreditable conduct. Many politicians resided, however uncomfortably, in the middle category. Even when party interests were opposed to a religiously-dictated desideratum, like the re-establishment of the Caliphate, party loyalists rarely dared to declare their disapproval for fear that their obedience to Islam would be questioned. Islamic affairs were discussed with lively interest by the party, and sometimes even the Coptic press, and attendance at Friday services and other displays of piety helped keep a party's devotion to Islam before the public eye. Certain Coptic politicians even made a point of attending mosque services, although few were able to make such profitable use of Islam as Makram.

All parties, then, used religion to strengthen their support and explain their aims, actions and policies. An integral part of this strategy sometimes was to make a public issue of the role that the Copts played in politics. Some parties claimed to see conspiracies at every hand. They also, by questioning the amount of power some Muslim politicians placed in the hands of their Coptic colleagues, were able to question those politicians' dedication to Islam and

responsiveness to their constituents. This tactic was used mainly against the Wafd by the Liberals, the Saʿdists and the Palace and its affiliates. The Liberals were among the worst offenders; their journal, al-Kashkūl, was perhaps the most consistently anti-Coptic of any published in Egypt. The record of al-Siyāsa was not much better. A later offender, and one with the dubious merit of at least believing what it said, was the Muslim Brethren organization. Hassan al-Bannā', the Supreme Guide, believed that Coptic participation in politics should be strictly limited; Muhammad Husain Haikal, however scurrilous his newspaper al-Siyāsa, believed at least theoretically in the right of the Copts, as Egyptian citizens, to play a political role. The problem for the Liberals, who were perhaps the first to use ethnic propaganda in this period, was that the Wafd's credentials were such that they had few means of undermining that reputation and enhancing their own. The role the Copts played in the Wafd had not only been commented on during the revolution, but had actually been praised; the Liberals tried to make it into an object of criticism.

Partly because personalities took precedence over policies, politicians were frequently criticized for adhering to the wrong religion or being insufficiently attentive to the right one. Even the mere use of names, which generally marked the holder as Copt or Muslim, could serve as a political weapon. Two Wafdist Copts went so far as to alter their names, an hypocrisy which displeased many of their co-religionists. Early in his political career, Makram ʿUbaid dropped his first name, William. William was a double misfortune; not only was it the only part of his name that labelled him a Christian but it had foreign and Protestant connections which were capable of arousing even Coptic distaste. The anti-Wafdist press was able to

capitalize on this by almost unfailingly referring to Makram as "William" or "William Makram". Years later, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīha did the same thing when he dropped his last name, which means "Christ". The Wafdist press, which called Makram "Makram ʿUbaid" now referred to Masīha as "'Ibrāhīm Faraj". Muslims unacquainted with Wafdist personalities could have been excused for thinking both Muslim.

Copts active in parties other than the Wafd were not above suspicion. In December 1933 two Ministry of Justice officials were overheard deploring the Coptic role in the Shaʿb and al-'Ittihād parties. The two men were convinced that the Coptic members of both met secretly to vote on party matters and then persuaded their Muslim colleagues to adopt their view.[1] This was a suspicion that was most frequently voiced about the Copts in the Wafd. The Wafd was the only party to defend Coptic political participation and to go on promoting a Coptic role in defiance of its opponents. It almost never, as a party policy, used divisive tactics, although there is some evidence to suggest that it could not resist an occasional ethnic jab at Makram's al-Kutla. In general, however, the Wafd did not use ethnic appeals because it was so vulnerable to them itself.

Until 1927, the charge most frequently brought against the Wafd was that it was a Coptic clique. Once Makram became Secretary-General, that clique gained a leader; both the party and al-Nahhās were portrayed as puppets in the hands of a sly, evil genius.[2] Both accusations at least implied that there was a Coptic conspiracy to rule Egypt.[3] At times, the charges were more explicit and ugly. In the

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1. FO.141/744. 1167/2/33.
2. There is evidence to suggest that criticism of the role Makram played in the Wafd dates to 1923. See al-Kashkūl, 31 August 1923, p.4.
3. Al-Kashkūl, 20 September 1929, p.5.

1930s, the Copts sometimes were likened to the Jews as described by Nazi propaganda.[4] They were also accused of working for a national home in Egypt as were the Jews in Palestine.[5]

Such charges, as absurd as they were, cast aspersion upon and ultimately undermined the right of the Copts to participate in politics. They suggested that the Copts in politics could only act as Copts; they would always think, work and vote as Copts and could not, therefore, represent the general interest. These charges perpetuated the traditional view of non-Muslims, which was one which could never mesh with Western political thought. The Liberals, the Saʿdists and the Palace never publicly came to grips with the kind of place they envisioned for the Copts; such an explicit formulation was left to tradition and some of the more religiously oriented groups like the Muslim Brethren.

The Wafd, to its credit, never allowed its accusers the dignity of trying to prove that the Copts did not dominate party councils. Unless circumstantial evidence and the obvious decline of Copts in the Wafd is taken as proof, there are few signs that the Wafd consciously tried to reduce Coptic visibility, except in the matter of names, in order to render the party less vulnerable to these charges. Generally, the Wafd countered by accusing its opponents of trying to divide the nation. This was a crime which would have seemed more heinous in the 1920s when the ideals of the revolution were still fresh, than in the 1930s. By the end of the latter decade, those ideals had grown somewhat stale and the Wafd's response was not adequate to the change. Perhaps realizing this, the Wafd defended national unity and the Coptic role in

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4. FO.141/744, 1167/2/33.
5. Al-Siyāsa, 9 September 1929, PPF.

politics less in the 1940s than it had in the previous two decades. Its defence of secularism decreased with its reliance on religion, but it had always stressed, as one reply, that Wafdists were good Muslims and patriots. It also tried to cast doubt on its opponents' charges of Coptism by discrediting the religiosity of those opponents.

It has, in fact, been suggested by one scholar, Leland Bowie, that the Wafd, by attacking the Liberals as atheists, provoked anti-Coptic propaganda in retaliation.[6] Both he and Charles Smith, possibly acting on the suggestion of 'Ahmad Shafīq Pasha, accept 1928-9 as the point at which the Liberals began to describe the Wafd as a Coptic clique.[7] Bowie, insisting on a Liberal tendency to reside "above the political fray" until 1929, believes that the Wafd was the first "to play on Islamic loyalties for political gain".[8] However, the Liberals grubbed in political dirt as early as 1923, when they first began to appeal to sectarian sentiments. There is little indication that the Wafd made more than the most cursory appeals to religious sentiment that were seemingly de rigueur until 1925-6 when the books of two men with Liberal connections, ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Rāziq and Ṭaha Ḥusain, gave the party ample ammunition. In the eyes of many Egyptians, the Wafd then had grounds for calling the Liberals atheists.[9] This charge, of course, was only

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6. Leland Bowie, "The Copts, the Wafd and Religious Issues in Egyptian Politics", The Muslim World 67 (1977), p.106.
7. Ibid., 123. Charles Smith, "The Crisis of Orientation: The Shift of Egyptian Intellectuals to Islamic Subjects in the 1930s", International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 4 (1973), p.399. 'Aḥmad Shafīq believed that national unity was not threatened until 1929, and that after that date the Egyptians became two peoples, Copts and Muslims. See his Ḥawliyāt Miṣr al-Siyāsa, vol.6. (1929) (Cairo 1931), pp.1253-4.
8. Bowie, Muslim World, p.120-1.
9. In the 1926 election, for example, Haikal's Wafdist opponent accused him of atheism and of working to destroy Islam. The Wafdist al-Balāgh also accused the Liberals of atheism, in spite of the formal collaboration of the two parties. Charles Smith, "Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal: An Intellectual and Political Biography", unpublished PhD University of Michigan 1968, pp.221-3.

one of many aimed at the Liberals, but it may have been the most damaging one. Even in 1930, when the Wafd was arguing with the Liberals over the design of Zaghlūl's tomb, the party press attached the Liberals, who were promoting an Islamic style, as hypocrites in zealots' clothing. One article noted that they were among those who were least interested in religion and had the least respect for its people.[10]

Bowie is correct in suggesting that the Wafdist charge was damaging to the political system in that it hampered the development of a secular state, but anti-Coptic propaganda must be counted at least equally harmful. The Liberals manufactured it throughout this era and, although they did rely on communal sentiment more from 1929, the difference was one of quantity and not type. Liberal and later 'Ittihādist and Sa^{c}dist propaganda made the need for the Wafdists to pose as good Muslims more acute and only refuelled the religious rivalty.

What is perhaps most remarkable is that the British believed many of the things said about the Copts in the Wafd. Just as they were convinced that the Copts supported the nationalist movement out of fear, so they were persuaded that the Copts were the most influential members of the Wafd and that al-Nahhās was clay in the hands of Makram. The Residency used this belief to discredit the Wafd in the eyes of the Foreign Office. In 1923, for example, the Residency described Zaghlūl as being under the influence of "the Coptic and extremist wing".[11] Six years later, H.M. Anthony disparaged al-Nahhās by claiming that "his sole active supporters (....those who pay and not those who shout) are the Copts. I need not tell you what that means in a Muslim country".[12]

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10. Al-Balāgh, 6 February 1930, p.1.
11. FO.407/197, No.97 (Enclosure), Situation Report, 19 September-2 October 1923; FO.371/20883. J1411/20/16; FO.371/20884, J3105/20/16; Lampson's unpublished Diaries, 10 March 1937, pp.48-9; 30 May 1936, p.144.
12. FO.371/13843, J1744/5/16.

B. Religious Appeals and the Palace

The two reigning monarchs in this period, Fu'ād and Fārūq, had both a traditional and a constitutional responsibility to protect the religion of the state. Since they were not Egyptian in origin, a fact which they celebrated, they emphasized religion and the essential unity of all Muslims to inspire fealty. Both kings bolstered their political power by relying on their religious authority and their support in al-'Azhar. With regional ambitions as well as local needs, the Palace made a great show of its piety and frequently appealed to religious sentiment. Its pursuit of the Caliphate is only one example. While the Palace never allowed its name to be directly tied to anti-Coptic propaganda, it did permit its partisans to produce it in the pursuit of their mutual interest. The 1938 election campaign, discussed later, provides the clearest example of this.

As the most serious rival to its power, the Wafd was the party most feared and hated by the Palace. One way the latter attempted to discredit the Wafd was by accusing it of disloyalty to the throne. Because the Wafd was also said to be dominated by Copts, Coptic loyalty to the throne was placed under suspicion. It was, however, not simply this connection with the Wafd that damned the Copts in Palace eyes; the Palace appears to have felt that the Copts, more than any other Egyptians, were natural anti-monarchists and republicans.[13] The Coptic press frequently felt obliged to proclaim its allegiance as well as it gratitude to the House of Muḥammad ʿAlī.[14]

The Wafd probably was not unduly damaged by accusation of disloyalty until Fārūq succeeded his father in 1936. In the few years

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13. FO.141/722, 616/50/36; FO.141/644, 158/149/37.
14. Several such articles appeared in the summer of 1937. See Misr, 27 July 1937, p.1.

following this, the Palace was able to draw a clear parallel between the devout Muslim monarch and the secular, irreligious and Coptic-dominated Wafd party. Palace manipulation of Islamic sentiment focused at this time on two issues: (1) Fārūq's stated desire for a religious rather than a secular coronation ceremony, and (2) his wish to receive religious instruction from Shaikh Mustafā al-Marāghī. With a Wafd government in power, it was only natural that the Wafd in general and Makram in particular would be accused of prohibiting both. It was also proposed that the Wafd had sought British backing for these actions against Islam.

The coronation issue was energetically discussed by the press in 1937 and was returned to during the 1938 election campaign. The constitution demanded only that the king swear an oath before Parliament. The Wafd, on both constitutional and tactical grounds, refused to contemplate the religious service advocated by the Palace. It feared that such a ceremony would suggest that royal power emanated not from the people but from Islam and would accordingly increase Palace power at Wafdist expense. The Wafdist press, therefore, described the proposed flamboyant ceremony as almost idolatrous and a contradiction of Islam's simplicity.[15] One Deputy, speaking on behalf of the Palace, claimed in the Chamber that a religious ceremony would uphold Egypt's dignity as an Islamic state, and he asked Prime Minister al-Nahḥās if he was aware of the danger of excluding the ʿulamā' from the coronation. The latter replied that the king's assumption of his constitutional powers was a national matter and that all Egyptians, Muslim and non-Muslim, had a right to participate in the ceremony.[16]

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15. Al-Miṣri, 26 June 1937, PPF.
16. The Deputy was ʿAbd al-Rāziq Wahbah al-Qāḍī. Chamber Debates, second session, 21 July 1937.

Shaikh al-Marāghī, perhaps guiding the Palace by playing on its fears and prejudices, insisted rather curiously that public antagonism to Coptic influence was behind the controversy over the religious ceremony. He added that Egyptians wished to re-emphasize, through the ceremony, that the government of Egypt was an Islamic one,[17] and he held up the spectre of a Coptic takeover which would produce a new Christian aristocracy before which Muslims would be forced to kneel.[18] Copts clearly were unnerved by the charge that they had a hand in this religious issue;[19] Misr dared not even mention it. The Patriarch sent a note to the King deploring rumours which questioned Coptic loyalty to the throne.[20] The King reassured the Patriarch, in writing and later in person, that he was aware of their fealty.[21] At the same time, Najīb 'Iskandar, now a Palace ally, condemned the Patriarch's note for implying that the Copts were separate from the rest of the nation.[22] Latīf Nakhla, a Coptic notable and probable Palace loyalist, voiced a similar objection.[23] The same fracas occurred over the religious tutorials with al-Marāghī; the King was far more interested in using the Wafd's refusal against the party than he was in studying Islam with the Shaikh.

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17. FO.141/481, 158/49/37.
18. FO.371/20914, J3809/369/16/
19. Two of the Regents, Sabrī and ʿIzzat Pashas, did not think that the Copts were behind the objections since al-Nuqrāshī and and 'Aḥmad Māhir were also known to oppose the religious ceremony. FO.141/644, 158/49/37.
20. CCEH. ʿĀbdīn Palace Files on the Copts. F2/D2, card 641, Letter dated 1 December 1937.
21. The Patriarch, in a rather fulsome response, compared the King to King Solomon. Al-Muqaṭṭam, 24 January 1938, PPF.
22. Al-'Ahrām, 30 December 1937, PPF.
23. Al-'Ahrām, 20 December 1937, PPF.

Not only did the Palace, through its manipulation of religious sentiment, encourage sectarian tensions, but it also failed to try to improve relations between the two communities when they began to sour. Fārūq, whose reputation had suffered by the late 1940s, was probably unwilling to appear overly conciliatory toward the Copts; but it is just as likely that he was simply not interested in their problems. Fārūq probably became even less well disposed to the community in 1950 when his sister, Fathiyya eloped with Riyād Ghālī, a Coptic diplomat. Islamic law fobade such marriages and the Coptic church was not enthusiastic about any mixed marriages, let alone this one. The royal mésalliance caused a considerable stir. Riyād Ghālī was condemned by the press; and the government to forestall violence, put guards on churches the first Sunday after the event was publicized.[24] In an action Misr reported, the Coptic Patriarch apologized to the King for the groom's behaviour. As the paper pointed out, the Coptic community was not collectively responsible for the actions of one of its members.[25]

C. Elections

No better examples of the use of anti-Coptic propaganda exist than election campaigns. In some campaigns ethnic propaganda was widespread and the result of party decision to exploit religious feeling. In others, it was either not a general strategy or it was simply less apparent. In all elections, however, individual Muslim candidates used sectarian tactics against Coptic opponents. It was a temptation

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24. Zaghīb Mīkhā'īl Farriq Tasud! al-Wahda al-Wataniyya w-al-'Akhlāq al-Qawmiyya (no place, n.d.) pp.122 6

25. Misr, 16 May 1950, p.1. The romance ended unhappily when Ghālī murdered his estranged wife and then shot himself in 1976. Herald Tribune, 13 December 1976, p.5.

to which even Wafdist candidates sometimes succumbed. Given the advantages that might have accrued to a Muslim running against a Copt in a predominantly Muslim district, it is interesting that Muslims were not routinely nominated to run against Copts. Certainly it was the pattern in the more heavily Coptic constituencies to run Copts against Copts.

Little benefit would be derived from a discussion of every campaign because the propaganda differed less in kind than in quantity. Nor is there any kind of arithmetic progression in the amount of propaganda. Ethnic appeals were more of a problem in 1923 than in 1942. However, the general increase in communal tensions from the mid-1940s probably meant that the population was more receptive to sectarian and Islamic propaganda and that it had a more telling effect then than in earlier years. The 1923 and 1938 Chamber elections will be the ones focused on here, in addition, an interesting by-election in 1943 will be examined. Favourite themes in these and other campaigns were that the Copts were unscrupulous, that they had joined the nationalist movement to advance communal interests, that they had too great a hold on various Egyptian institutions, and that the Wafd was the means by which they sought to rule.

The 1923 campaign saw the first significant use of anti-Coptic propaganda since before the war. The Liberal Constitutionalists manufactured it for use against the Wafd; as Ṭāriq al-Bishrī has noted, their journal al-Kashkūl consistently implied that the election was a struggle between Copts and Muslims, Wafdists and Liberals.[26]

The Liberals, gearing up for the campaign, first objected to the number of Copts appointed to Wafdist election committees.[27] Copts were,

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26. Ṭāriq al-Bishrī, "Miṣr al-Ḥadītha Bain 'Aḥmad w-al-Masīḥ", al-Kātib, 121 (1971), p.146; al-Kashkūl, 24 August 1923, p.3.
27. Ibid.

in fact, well represented on these committees but hardly dominated them. The Liberal press blamed Copts for posing as the greatest patriots in Egypt, for supporting the British presence and for monopolizing the civil service.[28] It also reminded voters of the names of those Coptic candidates who had attended the 1911 Coptic Congress.[29] Makram was accused of having backed the 1919-20 Milner plan in return for the promise of a provincial governorship,[30] while Wīsā Wāsif and Wāsif Ghālī were said to have taken control of the Wafd.[31] Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr was so worried by the anti-Coptic statements of his opponent that he feared that Jirjā Muslims were not yet ready to elect a non-Muslim representative.[32]

The Wafd did not let these charges pass unremarked; al-Balāgh, Misr and individual Wafdists all responded. Makram, speaking in Shubrā, declared that the unity of Copts and Muslims was inviolable.[33] Zaghlūl, upon his return from exile, criticized attempts to divide the Egyptians and he celebrated the holy unity between cross and crescent.[34] In a special visit to the Patriarch, Zaghlūl again emphasized the need for unity.[35] When the Wafd won the election, its egalitarian attitude seemed vindicated. Unfortunately, the mauling received by the Liberals probably only increased their willingness to rely on discreditable tactics.

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28. Al-Kashkūl, 17 August 1923, p.19; 24 August 1923, p.3; al-Bishrī, al-Katib, p.145.
29. Ibid.
30. See al-Kashkūl, 31 August 1923, p.4.
31. Al-Kashkūl, 6 July 1923, p.4.
32. Fakhrī and 'Aḥmad Muṣṭafā 'Abū Rahab frequently ran against one another and the latter, according to Saʿd Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, always raised the ethnic issue. Interview Saʿd Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, 17 May 1979.
33. 'Aḥmad Qāsim Judah (ed.), al-Makramiyyāt (Cairo, n.d.), pp.163-4.
34. Egyptian Gazette, 21 September 1923, p.3.
35. Al-Bishrī, Al-Kātib, p.148.

In 1938 it was the Wafd's turn to be disappointed. Wafdists failed to secure a neutral Ministry to conduct the elections and all the administrative means at the government's disposal were used on behalf of its candidates and against the Wafd.[36] Even setting aside blatant corruption, the innovative scheduling of the election in Upper Egypt, where the Prime Minister had considerable influence, first inevitably affected voting in the Delta. Government candidates won by inconceivable majorities; one even obtained a vote of over 100 per cent.

One French newspaper concluded that the election was a personality contest between al-Nahḥās and the King.[37] It would have been more accurate to describe it as a match between Makram representing Coptic participation in politics and King Fārūq symbolizing the pious Muslim ruler. Makram and al-Nahḥās were both attacked for their hostility to the popular King.[38] Religious and ethnic appeals played a large part in the government's campaign and anti-Coptic circulars were distributed. Miṣr al-Fatāt, the Liberals and the Saʿdists were all allied with the Palace, and al-'Azhar was active on behalf of Palace candidates.

Young Egypt's leader, 'Aḥmad Ḥusain, was released from prison in January 1938 to enable him to promote the Palace cause. In a favourite refrain, he accused al-Nahḥās and Makram of worshipping the British,[39] and the latter of soliciting British help to prevent Fārūq's religious

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36. Grafftey-Smith described the process succinctly in 1931: "The Mudir instructs the Ma'mur Markaz, the Ma'mur Markaz instructs the ʿumda and possibly sends out a couple of camel corps to each village to assist and there goes the electorate, trooping to the polls". FO.471/15404, J1110/26/16.
37. Journal des Debats, 20 April 1938, PPF.
38. One such circular was entitled "al-Kharijān ʿalā al-Malik" ("Outsiders/Rebels Against the King") PHS. American Mission in Egypt Archives.
39. Egyptian Gazette, 25 January 1938, p.5.

tutorials with al-Marāghī.[40] Articles in the organization's newspaper, claimed that 90 per cent of al-Nahḥās' supporters were Copts, and that these Copts would back Makram no matter what his crimes.[41] In addition to discouraging Muslim supporters of the Wafd, Young Egypt may have been trying, as Salāma Mūsā charged, to frighten the party's Coptic followers.[41] In a country where election procedures were routinely abused, this could be a useful tactic.

The Saʿdist and Liberal press attacked Makram and his puppet al-Nahḥās on every issue. The Saʿdists accused the latter of being "enchanted with the idea of sacred leadership imagined by Makram ʿUbaid Pasha".[43] Saʿdist speeches emphasized the Wafd's insensitivity to Muslim religious feeling. The religious coronation ceremony and al-Marāghī's tutorials were returned to time and again.[44] Both Saʿdists and Liberals complained that Makram, in his capacity as Finance Minister, had literally shortchanged al-'Azhar.[45] The Copts' lust for power, although well known, required endless comment. Al-Kashkūl noted that too many Copts (30 out of 230) had been nominated by the Wafd for Chamber seats, when a more reasonable number would have been three.[46]

Al-Kashkūl remarked that Makram and al-Nahḥās were hostile to Islam and added that trusting them to protect religion was like throwing a lamb to the wolves.[47] Al-Nahḥās was criticized for shamming piety and Makram

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40. Miṣr, 24 March 1938, p.2. This theme was explored in at least one election handbill. Al-Nahḥās was said to have objected to the religious tutorials in order to please Makram. See handbill entitled "Makram". PHS. American Mission in Egypt Archives.
41. Miṣr al-Fatāt, 31 January 1938, p.11.
42. Miṣr, 3 February 1938, p.1.
43. Egyptian Gazette, 6 January 1938, p.5.
44. Al-Balāgh, 20 March 1938, PPF.
45. Makram was so worried by this criticism that he lodged complaints with the Parquet against al-Balāgh and al-Siyāsa. Al-Balāgh, 16 January 1938, PPF.
46. Al-Kashkūl, 25 February 1938, pp.4, 6.
47. Ibid., 11 February 1938, pp.34-5.

for hypocrisy in quoting from the Qur'ān.[48] The Wafd Ministry, according to al-Kashkūl, had been a Coptic Ministry serving Copts; twisting Makram's slogan, the journal wrote that both al-Nahhās and "William Pasha" were Muslims in religion and Copts in country.[49] The journal somehow managed to reconcile the fact that Makram was leading a Coptic clique with its new charge that he, as a Protestant, was not a genuine member of the Coptic community.[50]

The Wafdist press responded vigorously to this propaganda, but Misr, as the one remaining Coptic daily, bore the brunt of the work. Salāma Mūsā reminded readers who were unlikely to need reminding that the Copts, feeling their interests to be identical with those of their Muslim compatriots, had rejected British and League guarantees for their safety.[51] He condemned al-Siyāsa for writing about the Copts as though they were the Untouchables of India.[52]

Mūsā defended Makram but his real interest was in protecting the community. Makram was able to look after himself. In speeches and interviews he condemned the Ministry for encouraging religious fanaticism.[53] He noted that this had long been a tactic used against the Wafd, and he asserted that he had been so worried by it in 1937 that he had almost resigned from the Cabinet.[54] Throughout the campaign, al-Nahhās praised Makram and reaffirmed the brotherhood of Copts and Muslims.[55]

'Azharī activity in the campaign is one sign of both the politicization of Egyptian students by the late 1930s and the increased

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48. Ibid.
49. Al-Kashkūl, 25 February 1938, p.4.
50. Ibid., pp.1-2.
51. Misr, 6 January 1938, p.3; 3 February 1938, p.1.
52. Misr, 15 January 1938, p.1.
53. Al-Misri, 8 March 1938, PPF; al-'Ahrām, 9 March 1938, p.9.
54. He said that al-Nahhās had dissuaded him. Al-Wafd al-Misri, 10 March 1938, PPF.
55. Al-'Ahrām, 18 January 1938; al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 11 March 1938, quoted in Samīra Bahr, "al-'Aqbāṭ fī al-Hayāt al-Siyāsiyya fī Miṣr" unpublished PhD thesis, Cairo University 1977, p.703.

use made of religion in politics. 'Azharī students travelled the country promoting the idea that a vote for al-Nahhās was a vote against Islam.[56] They booed Wafdist candidates, caused some violence and were particularly troublesome in cities where there were religious institutes.

ᶜUlamā' also became involved in the campaign, and sermons in mosques were used to stir up religious feeling. Shaikh Muhammad ᶜAlī, of Cairo's al-Rifāᶜī mosque, expounded at one Saᶜdist meeting on the close tie between Islam and politics. He blamed al-Nahhās for sundering this tie and announced that Muslims would not allow their religion to be undermined by a Christian enemy like Makram.[57] Shaikh al-Marāghī also used his more lavish talents on the government's behalf; his manipulation of sectarian and religious feeling upset first the Copts and then the British. Like his allies, he used Islam's supposed place in the political arena as grounds for attacking the Copts. His Friday sermons became diatribes against the Copts, Christian missionaries and secularism,[58] as well as a means of guaranteeing his own power by advancing that of Islam. He attacked Makram and, in one radio broadcast slandered the Copts as "foxes".[59] He appears to have recommended publicly that Muslims make political choices according to a religious criterion.[60] He declared in one interview that no Muslim who knew anything about Islam could claim to be apolitical, and he added that he wished to see Islam rule Egyptian life because the country's population was mainly Muslim and because the official religion of state was Islam: "Islam is not like other religions which make a

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56. FO.371/21947, J1211/6/16.
57. La Réforme, 29 March 1938, PPF.
58. Misr, 15 February 1938, p.1.
59. FO.317/21945, J893/6/16.
60. US Department of State Archives, No.883.00. General Conditions/73. Political Summary, March 1938.

distinction between religion and politics and, in fact, consider them as separate matters and entirely different from one another".[61] In a February broadcast, he criticized those missionaries who told their Muslim disciples that if they wanted to be heroes of civilization and pioneers of reform they had to announce that their religion was not good for civilization.[62] This attack on Egyptian secularists was part of his general defence of Islam from the attacks of others. In once interview, he claimed that Islam was as appropriate to the present as to the past.[63] He noted, rather forbiddingly, that non-Muslims should be happy to see a strengthened Islam because it was only the fear of Judgment Day that kept Muslims from slaughtering non-Muslims.[64] In an earlier interview, he insisted that Muslims had always lived on good terms with Christians and Jews and had never persecuted them. He pointed to the strong and adequate guarantees Islam offered non-Muslims; guarantees which consisted of forbidding Muslims "to attack the life, honour and worldly goods of Christians and Jews".[65] The welfare of Islam neatly coincided with the Shaikh's own interests and ambitions; it is not clear to what extent he believed his public statements. Even as late as 1937, the British were describing him as holding "enlightened views".[66]

Even if the Shaikh and his audience believed implicitly in his ideas, there were many candidates who held a more jaundiced view and encouraged religious feeling as one of the more effective weapons at hand. Hassan Rifa'at, who as Under-Secretary at the Interior helped

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61. Ibid., No.383.1163/46.
62. Ibid., No.383.1163/45. Despatch dated 21 February 1938.
63. Mişr, 7 March 1938, p.1.
64. US Department of State Archives, No.383.1163/47, quoting La Bourse Egyptienne, 19 March 1938.
65. Ibid., No.383.1163/46, quoting the Egyptian Mail, 5 March 1938.
66. FO.371/21947, J1097/6/16.

fix the elections, told the British that the government was justified in using the religious issue to win.[67] Prince Muhammad ʿAlī shared, at least in part, this pragmatic view of religion. Lampson recorded that the Prince was open about "the part played during the elections by the religious element and made no bones about it that he and his family had spurred on the 'Azharīs throughout the country to link up religion with the case against al-Nahhās".[68] Shaikh al-Marāghī excused his own activity to Lampson in May when he pointed out that all parties used religion and, even if they did not, the Copts had grown arrogant and needed to be reminded of their place.[69] This was a feeling that was shared by the Brethren some ten years later.

However concerned Lampson may have been with anti-Coptic propaganda, he made no move to do anything about it until March. In the wake of a conversation the Oriental Secretary had with a very worried S.A. Morrison of the Egypt Inter-Mission Council, Lampson talked to the Prime Minister on 8 March.[70] Lampson expressed his dislike of the government's anti-Christian strategy and noted that Shaikh al-Marāghī's behaviour was particularly offensive. Mahmūd was conciliatory. He had, in fact, made a number of statements extolling unity and brotherhood during the campaign but, as Prime Minister, he was bound by more constraints than his followers. Mahmūd admitted that the propaganda was designed for electoral ends only, as though the fact that the government had a practical aim and did not actually believe its statements made its tactic somehow more acceptable. Mahmūd added that he had already called a halt to the Shaikh's activities and that all similar

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67. FO.371/21947, J1097/6/16.
68. Lampson's unpublished Diaries, 3 April 1938, p.60.
69. FO.371/21947, J2086/6/16.
70. FO.371/21946, J1079/6/16.

propaganda would cease.[71] Two days later, al-Marāghī insisted to Smart that his aim was not to increase anti-Coptic feeling. He pointed out that, at the end of his sermon on Coptic "foxes", he had reminded his audience of their duty to respect the People of the Book,[72] a palliative that must have appeared inadequate to the Copts.

While the government may have decreased its manufacture of religious propaganda after Lampson's conversation with Mahmūd, it by no means stopped it.[73] The Wafd continued to be accused of working against Islam and Makram's objections to the religious tutorials were still retailed. It would, in any case, have been difficult to prevent individual candidates from appealing to sectarian sentiment in their constituencies. With the election only three weeks away, ethnic propaganda had probably already done all the damage it was going to do.

The British intervention was too late, too little. When reassured that the campaign would halt with the election, they were satisfied. Prince Muhammad ʿAlī correctly gauged Lampson's real interest when he told him that al-Marāghī's declarations were anti-Coptic and not anti-missionary.[74] Al-Marāghī had spoken against missionaries and anti-missionary tracts were in circulation,[75] and the British feared a recurrence of earlier anti-missionary campaigns. Lampson told Shaikh al-Marāghī after the election that he had raised the issue of campaign tactics only because of Britain's indirect interest in the welfare of

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71. FO.371/21946, J1079/6/16. After speaking to the Prime Minister, Lampson took up the same matter with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. FO.317/21946, J1153/6/16.
72. FO.371/21946, J1079/6/16.
73. Leland Bowie suggests that after several weeks the Liberals halted their campaign against the Copts because they feard that events might get out of hand. This generous verdict seems forced. Bowie, The Muslim World, p.125.
74. Elie Kedourie, The Chatham House Version..., p.200.
75. US Department of State Archives, No.383.1163/45, 21 February 1938.

Egypt and direct interest in the well-being of foreign Christian communities.[76] The Foreign Office seems to have feared that anti-Christian propaganda would spread to the Sudan or lead to an outburst of feeling against British policy in Palestine,[77] but felt that the propaganda was an act "of folly which we must regret but cannot in post-treaty conditions prevent".[78] What this particular official meant was that British strategic interests were not seriously threatened by the government's policy on this issue.

Understandably, the Coptic community was more concerned with the government's methods than the British. Some apparently blamed Makram for giving the government a stick with which the beat the whole community.[79] Murād Wahbah, son of the ex-prime minister Yūsuf Wahbah, even resigned his post as Minister of Agriculture because he so disliked his colleagues' anti-Coptic campaign. Unfortunately, he then sacrificed his principles to ambition by accepting a portfolio in the post-election Cabinet. Other non-Wafdist candidates such as Najīb 'Iskandar and Tawfīq Dūs showed no concern with the government's methods. The latter even had the gall to blame Makram for causing problems between Muslims and Copts.[80] The Wafd was so troubled that its Parliamentary Committee commented, in a petition to the King, that the use of religious issues in the campaign was undermining the spirit of national unity.[81]

The same day that Lampson mentioned his concern to the Prime Minister, the latter learnt of the anxiety of the Copts from a delegation

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76. FO.371/21947, J2086/6/16. One article in al-Kashkūl had resurrected all the false reports about missionary activity which had surfaced in 1933. FO.371/21946, J1079/6/16.
77. FO.371/21946, J1079/6/16.
78. FO.371/21946, J1211/6/16.
79. FO.371/21945, J859/6/16.
80. Egyptian Gazette, 19 March 1938, pp.7-8.
81. Translated copies of this petition were sent to England for distribution to the British people. FO.371/21946, J1100/6/16.

consisting of the Patriarch and several notables. Mahmūd reassured them that the government was doing all within its power to discourage factional strife.[82] The Patriarch's visit, however, may actually have been made at the behest of the Palace and not the community. Such visits were not common, and this one certainly gave the government an opportunity to placate the community which was perhaps even further soothed by the government's timely contribution of £E30,000 toward the Coptic quota for repairs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Patriarch did, at one point, become more directly involved in the campaign. ᶜAzīz Mishriqī, standing against Makram in Shubrā, paid a call on the Patriarch and the latter returned his visit. 'Ahmad Māhir, speaking on Mishriqī's behalf, referred to these visits, and so alarmed the Patriarch that the latter issued a statement deploring the use of his name in party politics.[83] Of course, by then, the damage was done.

There was some violence, including attacks on churches, but probably little more occurred than was usual in campaigns. In one typical incident, the Wafdist Coptic candidate, Louis Fānūs, was beaten up on the steps of the 'Asyūt courthouse in full view of placid authorities.[84] In general, however, Coptic candidates do not seem to have met with any more violence than Muslim candidates.

After Makram and his followers left the Wafd, the party was relieved of many Copts whose influence could be attacked. Ethnic propaganda was never again so systematically used by the government, Palace or political parties. However, the increase in communal tensions

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82. Al-'Ahrām, 9 March 1938, p.9.
83. Misr, 24 March 1938, p.3.
84. The long-suffering Fānūs took only 22 votes to his rival's 13,000 in a district which had sent him to Parliament in previous elections. Egyptian Gazette, 12 March 1938, pp.7-8.

inevitably weakened the position of Coptic politicians and made campaigning difficult. As Misr noted, ethnic appeals were something all Coptic candidates had to face.[85] As fewer and fewer Copts stood for election, the spectre of Coptic conspiracies could not so easily be raised. In the declining years of the monarchy, al-Kutla, with its many Copts, probably occasioned more ethnic comments than any other political party; but not nearly the number it would have faced had it been more of a threat. Its weakness offered it considerable protection.

Not even the Wafd was able to resist an occasional ethnic jab at al-Kutla; only the fact that the latter had inherited so many of the Wafd's Copts allowed the Wafd to use a weapon so long available only to its opponents. On at least one occasion the Wafd accused al-Kutla of sparking communal hostilities.[86] In a more serious incident, partisans of the Muslim Wafdist candidate in the 1943 Jirjā by-election mounted an anti-Coptic campaign against the chief contender, Maurice Fakhrī ʿAbd al-Nūr, who hoped to inherit his late father's seat.[87] Christians were victimized during the campaign and churches were attacked both before and after the election. The election was, of course, fixed; Maurice lost despite the backing of his powerful family and his tie to a great Wafdist and revolutionary figure. His constituency was also one-third Copt.

One way in which Copts tried to circumvent the problem of their religion was to campaign in the company of a Muslim Shaikh.[88] When

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85. Misr, 26 March 1946, p.1.
86. Al-Balāgh, 20 March 1946, p.2; Miṣr, 23 March 1946, p.1.
87. FO.371/35529, J880/2/16; FO.371/35530 J1321/2/16; FO.371/35531, J1626/2/16.
88. Both 'Ibrāhīm Faraj and Mirrīt Ghālī said they did this. Interview, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, 13 June 1979; interview Mirrīt Ghālī, 8 May 1979.

Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr was troubled by anti-Coptic propaganda in the 1923 campaign, Zaghlūl sent the peerless revolutionary orator, Shaikh al-Qayātī, to Jirjā to help Fakhrī. The Shaikh made the rounds of town mosques claiming that Fakhrī was a better Muslim than those Muslims who helped the British by opposing Zaghlūl.[89] Fakhrī, like so many other Wafdists, went on to win this first Chamber election. Makram, who relied heavily on his knowledge of Islam in campaigns, was the only Copt whose knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth were adequate enough to risk quotation; but it was not unheard of for other Coptic politicians to help celebrate Muslim holidays.[90] Sometimes Copts were criticized for exhibiting excessive familiarity with the Prophet Muhammad. When Makram compared al-Nahhās to the Prophet in a speech in September 1929, the opposition press, with some justice, raised a furore.[91] Al-Siyāsa asked why the Christian Makram did not compare his friend to Christ, adding that he was duping the Egyptians by quoting from the texts of a religion in which he did not believe. At the same time, Fakhri was accused of poking fun at Muslim beliefs by praying in mosques alongside Muslims.[92]

At times, Copts were faced not only with the implicit shortcoming of not being Muslim, but the more direct one that they were not good Christians. The latter charge probably was meant to deflect Coptic support from a given candidate and was usually aimed at Makram who was particularly vulnerable on this score. None the less, other Coptic politicians were similarly criticized. In 1925, for example, al-Siyāsa

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89. Interview, Saᶜd Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr, 17 May 1979.
90. Fakhrī ᶜAbd al-Nūr celebrated the holy month of Ramadān by having the Qur'ān recited in his house in the evenings during the 1929 election campaign. Tāriq al-Bishrī, al-Kātib, p.152.
91. Al-'Akhbār, 10 September 1929, PPF.
92. The Wafdist al-Balāgh only accused al-Siyāsa of trying to divide the nation. Al-Siyāsa, 9 September 1929; al-Balāgh, 9 September 1929, PPF.

insisted that Murqus HannA only went to church to use the pulpit as a political platform.[93]

Copts competing in largely Coptic constituencies against other Copts were less troubled by ethnic propaganda. Except for one election in which Murqus Sergius was standing, appeals were not made to specifically Coptic interests. In 1949, 'Ibrāhīm Faraj Masīha, ᶜAzīz Mishriqī and Sergius were all competing to represent the same Shubrā constituency in the Chamber. Sergius emphasized his long championship of Coptic rights and church reform.[94] He had the additional cachet of then being the Patriarch's Wakīl or Deputy. He accused 'Ibrāhīm Faraj of trying to pass as a Muslim by omitting the Mashīha from his name.[95] Those cautious members of the community who found Makram's behaviour worrisome were probably doubly alarmed by Sergius' candidacy. Although the pages of Misr had for some years been filled with complaints about the inequities in Egyptian society, the paper expressed the fear that Sergius' election would give the Chamber a religious colour.[96] The Patriarch, probably under some government pressure, finally forced Sergius to withdraw from the race.[97] Sergius could not, at this point, have helped calm troubled communal waters. 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, the victor, felt compelled to promise his constituents that he would work to achieve greater equality,[98] a promise that would never have been made had not the issue been raised by Sergius.

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93. See al-Watan's vigorous protest of this on 4 February 1925, p.1. Sometimes, however, the Coptic press did indicate some disappointment with the religiosity of a particular Coptic politician.
94. See the entire issue of al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 4 January 1950.
95. Al-Manāra al-Misiriyya, 30 November 1949, p.4.
96. Misr, 5 January 1950, p.1.
97. Misr, 11 January 1950, p.1.
98. Ibid.

It is very difficult to gauge the effect that ethnic and religious propaganda had on voting due to election boycotts and political corruption. It seems to have had little or no effect in 1923-4; the popularity of the Wafd was able to ensure the election of many of its Coptic candidates. Perhaps the ethnic issue influenced or confused voters in later elections. One peasant, only dimly following the candidates' charges and counter-charges, believed that the 1936 election was meant to determine whether the Egyptians wanted to be Copts or Muslims.[99] The Wafd had nominated in his district a Copt lawyer to stand against a local Muslim notable who was trying to take advantage of his religion. Ethnic propaganda probably was used to more telling effect against al-Kutla than the Wafd, but then al-Kutla was both more obviously Coptic and weaker than the Wafd. When used in campaigns, such propaganda inevitably resulted in minor incidents of violence against Copts. Churches were stoned, priests abused, Copts beaten up and occasionally anti-Coptic demonstrations sparked.[100] Its most serious effect may ultimately have been to make parties reluctant to nominate candidates whose position would be tenuous and Copts reluctant to stand in an election that might put their person, property and community at risk. In addition, by the late 1940s, the political use of Islam by the regular parties had backfired; the public recognized it as hypocrisy and was disinclined to credit either parties or Palace with a serious concern for Islam, or indeed anything other than their own power.

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99. FO.141/757, 491/10/36.
100. In 1945, for example, there were anti-Coptic demonstrations in Sūhāj, 'Asyūt and Alexandria. FO.371/45918, J777/3/16.

D. Communal Violence and the Role of the Muslim Brethren

Lawlessness was endemic in the Egyptian countryside; the greater the economic pressures, the more visible its manifestations. Muslims as well as Copts were its victims, and it is not always possible to separate ordinary criminal behaviour from violence motivated solely by religious feeling. It is particularly difficult to distinguish in cases of attacks on individual Copts. Misr was always tempted to describe these as attacks on the Copts as Christians.[101] However, a murder, robbery or beating might well have been the result of a grudge or plain mischance. The perpetrator might not have known or cared about his victim's religion. It is, however, possible to say that a quarrel between a Muslim and a Copt or their respective families was likely to be articulated, at least eventually in communal terms.[102] An additional problem for the Coptic minority was that public Christian rituals often roused Muslim ire; Christian processions were attacked and sometimes mocked.[103] Funerals and weddings were set upon, prayer meetings broken up, and priests, so visible in their distinctive garb, abused and beaten.[104] Habit was an important element in this violence. Communal problems were not necessarily the result of political rhetoric; and press incitement probably played a small role in the countryside, if a larger one in the cities. The press was, however, a potent source of rumour, and it exacerbated those problems which it did not actually create. For example, the anti-missionary campaign

101. Misr, 8 July 1937, p.5.
102. Urban Egyptians were more likely than the peasantry, who did not trust government institutions, to settle such disputes in court.
103. Following the 1930 election of the Copt Yaqūb Bibawī to the town council of Samalūṭ in Banī Suwaif, a mock funeral procession was paraded around the town and shouted threats at the houses of those Copts and Muslims who had voted to Bibawī. La Bourse Egyptienne, 1 May 1930, p.4.
104. For examples of unpleasant incidents, see Misr, 18 May 1934, p.2; 2 October 1945, p.2; 1 December 1951, p.1; al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 5 October 1949, p.1.

waged by the government's opponents in 1932-3 was greatly abetted by press incitement. It had unpleasant repercussions for some Coptic individuals and for a time caused grave concern in the community and the Residency.

The ever-alert Coptic press recorded relatively little communal violence in the 1920s. Misr could perhaps be suspected of turning a wilfully blind eye in its nationalist zeal, but other components of the Coptic press would not have been so tolerant. If violence occurred that could have been interpreted in a communal light, it would have been reported. There probably was more communal violence in the 1930s and still more in the 1940s, when press reports became more frequent and angry. These were both stressful decades; it is not surprising that sectarian violence increased along with the crime rate.

Ethnic problems seem to have occurred more often in places with a goodly number of Copts, but neither a majority nor so few as to render the community almost invisible. Because many Copts lived in urban areas, anti-Coptic outbursts occurred in Alexandria, Cairo, Suez, Tahtā, Luxor, Samalūṭ, Sūhāj and Zaqāziq. Eruptions were more likely in Upper Egypt than in the Delta; they occurred in almost every province of Upper Egypt except 'Aswan, a province with few Copts. The government probably was unable and may have been unwilling to protect Copts because the latter claimed repeatedly that the authorities looked the other way when they were victimized.[105] There was some truth to this. Government officials understandably were not eager to be seen to

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105. See Misr, 4 December 1930, p.2; 17 May 1934, p.1; 8 July 1937, p.5; 2 October 1945, p.4; 11 May 1946, p.3; al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 4 February 1935, p.7.

be taking vigorous steps against activities which many Muslims interpreted as in the best interests of their religion. It would, in any case, have been difficult to prevent sporadic incidents of violence against Copts, and the government may even have seen the Copts as a convenient safety valve for releasing the frustrations of the mob.

From 1946 the Copts focused on the Muslim Brethren and related religious groups like the Shabāb Muḥammad and the Young Men's Muslim Association as the greatest threat to both their safety and the concept of national unity. There were frequent reports in that year of the "aggressive attitude" Brethren in the provinces had taken toward the Copts. Given the tendency to place all postwar outrages on the Brethren, it probably is too easy to lay the responsibility for all anti-Coptic incidents at their door. However, their religious and political beliefs, as well as their zeal in promoting them, played an important role in exacerbating tensions. Misr and al-Manāra al-Miṣriyya described the Brethren as fanatics and worried that Brethren incitement would lead Muslims to despise Egyptian as well as foreign Christians. Misr saw Brethren activity as aimed at the creation of an Islamic state and abhorred their encouragement of anti-Coptic feeling.[106] The Brethren used both mosques and leaflets to spread their anti-Coptic message.[107] So worried were the Copts by al-Bannā's ambitions and so often did they hear themselves compared to the Jews in Europe, that they feared that they would meet a similar fate.[108]

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106. Misr, 9 May 1946, p.1.
107. In May 1946, for three days before the Prophet's birthday, the Shabāb Muḥammad abused the Copts from a Luxor mosque. Predictably, this sparked ugly anti-Coptic incidents. Misr, 11 May 1946, p.3; Misr, 18 April 1947, p.1; 19 April 1947, p.1.
108. Al-Manāra al-Miṣriyya, 24 April 1947, pp.1-4; Misr, 18 April 1946, p.1; 5 April 1948, p.1.

The Brethren were not blessed with innovative ideas on the place of religious minorities in a Muslim society. They adhered to earlier and more traditional arrangements and beliefs; these confined non-Muslims to an inferior position, and one which the Copts thought that they had left far behind.[109] Al-Bannā' repeatedly denied that the Brethren were hostile to minorities; Islam did not tolerate fanaticism.[110] He quoted Qur'ānic verses enjoining Muslims to treat non-Muslims well and to tolerate the practice of minority religions.[111] He claimed that Islam taught Muslims to revere Christ and his divine mission.[112] Al-Bannā', however, was very critical of the Christian religious establishment.[113]

Even Murqus Sergius conceded that the problem was not with Islam but with those adherents who twisted its teachings.[114] One reason for the Brethren's hostility, despite the tolerance recommended by their religion, was a belief that the Copts had acquired far more power than they had a right to have. All authority exercised by non-Muslims over Muslims was offensive and against the God-given order. In a Brethren demonstration in Shubrā, one speaker called on businesses to fire all their Coptic employees;[115] apparently some Brethren believed that only Muslims had a right to employment. The Shabāb Muḥammad shared a similar view; they announced that they would boycott objects and services provided by Copts. They claimed that

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109. Miṣr sometimes portrayed al-Bannā' as a throwback to an earlier age. Miṣr, 18 April 1946, p.1; 1 May 1946, p.1; 5 April 1948, p.1.
110. Al-Muṣawwar, 22 March 1946, p.5.
111. Charles Wendell (ed.) Five Tracts of Hassan al-Bannā' (Berkeley 1978), pp.119-21.
112. Egyptian Gazette, 27 December 1946, p.3.
113. For al-Bannā', true Christianity was not to be found in the Vatican or amidst "the luxury of the Patriarchs". DW HBM (QM): Security Report 4515, 21 November 1940.
114. French Embassy Archives, Cairo, Box 144, File 31/2. Revue des Periodiques Arabes, 31 December 1947, quoting al-Manāra al-Miṣriyya 27 December 1947.
115. Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud, p.111, quoting Miṣr, 3 May 1947.

they would allow non-Muslims freedom of worship only if they paid the old jizya tax.[116]

The Wafd came in for particular criticism; the Brethren thought the party was too attentive to the needs of non-Muslims,[117] and allowed the Copts to play too great a role in its councils. One Brethren ideologue, Muḥammad al-Ghazzalī, wrote that the Wafd had allocated 150 out of 214 constituencies to Coptic candidates in the 1923 election, an exaggeration so gross that sensible people would have dismissed it out of hand had they not been hearing similar charges for years.[118] The Brethren attacked the Wafd for displaying hostility toward Islam and blamed the party's enmity on "William Makram, the Egyptian Englishman and Muslim Christian".[119]

In 1946 Miṣr published a series of articles attacking the Brethren by Salāma Mūsā. For some weeks, the Brethren let them go unanswered and finally al-Bannā' published an open letter, which was addressed to the Patriarch, objecting to Miṣr's campaign.[120] Even if Yūsāb had been a strong Patriarch, Mūsā's articles would have worried him; they were useless as information since both the Copts and the government were aware of the problems the community faced. Mūsā's purpose was probably to strengthen the community's resolve to do something and to press the government by embarrassing it. The only problem with this was that the articles were most likely to anger the Brethren who would direct that anger against individual Copts. The

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116. It is not unreasonable to assume, as did Miṣr, that the Brethren supported this as well. Miṣr, 26 April 1946, p.1 and 1 May 1946, p.1.
117. Al-Nadhīr, Year I, No.12 (26 Jamād Thānin 1357: mid-summer or autumn, 1938), pp.3-7.
118. Muḥammad al-Ghazzalī, Our Beginning in Wisdom, translated by Ismail Fārūqi (Washington DC 1953) (first published 1950), p.100.
119. Al-Nadhīr, Year I, No.11 (12 Jamād Thānin 1357: 1938), pp.4-6.
120. Miṣr, 13 May 1946, p.1.

Metropolitan of al-Sharqiyya province, 'Anbā 'Aghābiyūs, had been working to ease sectarian tensions; Mūsā's articles only complicated his task.[121] The Patriarch, unable to reach Mūsā, threatened to cancel Misr's annual subsidy of £E1,400 if he continued to publish inflammatory articles. Since the paper's owners relied heavily on the subsidy, Mūsā was obliged to resign as editor.[122]

During 1946, there were attacks on Christian churches in Cairo.[123] In March 1947 tensions in Zaqāziq flared when an angry mob burned a Coptic church. Communal relations there had been strained for at least two years, partly due to Brethren activity.[124] It is not clear, however, that the Brethren were directly responsible for inciting the mob that March day. Al-Bannā', in a letter to the Patriarch, denied Brethren involvement and said that he had sent a letter to branch organizations reminding them of their obligations to dhimmīs.[125] He, the Patriarch and the Majlis Millī all exchanged letters emphasizing the importance of national unity.[125] The government, whose officials had taken no action to stop the mob, sent an apology to the local Bishop; and the provincial governor organized a festival of unity, to which an estimated 10,000 people came.[127] According to the British, the government was partly responsible for the incident because it was still employing ethnic propaganda, through elements like the Brethren, against the Wafd.[128] In fact, only a month after the fire a Palace

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121. It is not clear whether the Metropolitan was working on his own or at the behest of the Patriarch. DW ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives: Ṭawa'if Diniyya 1. Memorandum 15, 8 December1946.
122. Ibid. These were not, however, the last articles which Mūsā contributed on the subject of the Brethren.
123. Miṣr, 1 April 1947, p.1.
124. Ibid., pp.1, 4.
125. FO.371/63020, J1743/79/16.
126. FO.371/63020, J1952/79/16.
127. FO.371/63020, J1630/79/16.
128. Ibid.

official announced that the government would support the efforts of the Muslim Brethren.[129]

Both the Copts and the British noticed that the church fire coincided with the British evacuation of the Delta.[130] Some Copts were beginning to doubt the wisdom of British withdrawal. The only official British reaction was a letter to the Prime Minister, expressing concern about the riot and for the safety of British lives and property in the area.[131] The Brethren blamed the fire on the long-suffering British, and their 'Ikhwān al-Muslimīn accused the British of trying to divide the Egyptians. When Murqus Sergius held a meeting to discuss the arson, he was accused of collaborating with the British.[132] Both 'Akhbār al-Yawm and Rūz al-Yūsuf speculated that the British provoked the incident to demonstrate that the Egyptians were incapable of governing themselves.[133]

Most Cabinets courted the Brethren in the hope of directing their prodigious zeal against political opponents. Both al-Manāra al-Misriyya and Misr were angered by the government's failure to control the Brethren. In October 1948 Murqus Sergius drew up a petition, calling for the dissolution of the Brethren and all organizations which mixed religion and politics and were detrimental to equality, and then circulated it among Coptic notables.[134] In the wake of a number of political assassinations and the discovery of the Brethren's secret paramilitary apparatus, the government finally acted by dissolving the society in December 1948. The Copts were relieved,[135] but the Brethren continued to operate underground and were implicated

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129. Mīkhā'īl, Farriq Tasud, p.114, quoting Misr, 27 April 1947.
130. FO.371/63020, J1630/79/16.
131. FO.371/62991, J2406/13/16.
132. Al-Manāra al-Misriyya, 31 May 1947, pp.1-3.
133. FO.371/63020, J1743/79/16; FO.371/63029, J2411/13/16.
134. Sergius wrote the petition after receiving letters of concern from Copts. FO.141/1296, 506/3/48.
135. Misr, 10 December 1948, p.1.

in the sacking of a Coptic church in 1949.[136] They were also involved in a number of minor incidents, like removing crosses from the tops of churches.[137]

The Brethren were not hampered in their activities for long. The Wafd returned to power, partly through Brethren assistance, in 1950 and felt weak enough to need continued Brethren support. Despite the fact that its relations with the Brethren were not always easy, the latter was allowed to operate relatively freely. The Copts were somewhat disenchanted with the Wafd party by this point; and, although Misr did claim to be pleased with the formation of a Wafd Cabinet, it was unhappy with the party's conciliatory attitude toward the Brethren.[138] Certainly the paper had good reason to be concerned. During the campaign, the Wafdist press had praised the principles of the Brethren, defended them from various criminal charges and called the persecution of previous governments unjustified.[139] Misr again insisted that any society which wanted to divide the Egyptian people by establishing a religious dictatorship be banned.[140] The paper continued to attack the Brethren[141] and, by the autumn of 1951, was publishing daily complaints about incidents of religious fanaticism. There were anti-Coptic demonstrations in Cairo, with marchers shouting "Christianity is finished in Egypt", "One faith in Egypt - Islam", and "Today the English, tomorrow the Christians".[142] One activity of the

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136. In Giza. FO.371/73466, J919/1015/16.
137. FO.141/1333, 38/58/49G.
138. Misr, 4 March 1950, p.3.
139. FO.371/80348, E1016/42/50; FO.371/80351, E1018/1/16.
140. Misr, 1 November 1950. p.1.
141. See Misr, 2 June 1950, p.1 and 5 May 1951, p.1.
142. See The Times, press clippings on Egypt, 13 November 1951. Even the Vatican was concerned.

Cairene Brethren at this time was to visit heavily Coptic quarters and paint crosses on the houses.[143]

To the Copts, the government's December 1951 decision to restore the property of the Brethren was a sign that the Wafd finally had renounced its commitment to national unity. The sacking of a Suez church less than a month later underlined the fact that the Wafd would put its own interests ahead of the safety of those people who had for so many years seen the party as their best hope.

On 4 January 1952, a Coptic church, school and Benevolent Society building were destroyed and three Copts murdered by a mob in Suez. The government did nothing to stop the mob but probably had little control in an area that had become a theatre for guerrilla war against British troops. There was much fighting and little co-ordination. The mob, deciding that religion dictated political allegiance, murdered the three Copts on the assumption that they must be British spies. Some blamed the British for the incident,[144] but it was also rumoured that the Brethren were responsible.[145] There were certainly many Brethren fighting in the area. The Patriarch, probably under considerable political pressure, exonerated the Brethren publicly.[146] Makram ᶜUbaid, always ready to befriend the Brethren, visited Hassan

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143. Interview, Zāhir Riyād, Chairman, African Studies Department, Coptic Higher Research Institute, 1 June 1979.
144. Suez notables issued a pamphlet calling for inter-communal co-operation and warning against plots to divide Copts and Muslims. See Miṣr, 8 January 1952, p.2. Muḥammad 'Anīs seems to accept this interpretation when he suggests that it was confirmed that one of the riot's instigators worked in a British military camp, but it is difficult to extrapolate any firm meaning from this. See 'Anīs, Ḥarīq al-Qāhira 26 January 1952 (Beirut 1972), pp.23-5.
145. Miṣr, 18 January 1952, p.2.
146. Not only was the Patriarch visited by 'Ibrāhīm Faraj and al-Nahhās, but Makram ᶜUbaid also paid a call.

al-Hadaibī, the Supreme Guide; and the two of them, along with other Brethren officials, chatted about the inviolability of national unity. Makram then invited al-Hadaibī to visit the Patriarch and the two men did so on 18 January.[147]

Coptic communities all over Egypt responded quickly. Telegrams of grief and protest were sent to the government and the Palace. Copts demanded that the government act promptly.[148] The Patriarch and the Majlis Millī announced that Christmas would be a time of mourning and not celebration. The government tried to dissuade the church from making this very public gesture, but failed. 'Ibrāhīm Faraj, the only Copt in the Cabinet, carried the government's apologies to the Patriarch. Al-Nahhās both telephoned the Patriarch and paid a personal visit to express his grief and announced a grant of £E5,000 to rebuild the church.[149] The Majlis Millī rejected the compensation and demanded an investigation in its place; as Misr commented, the money could not replace lives. The paper blamed the government for failing in its duty to protect all Egyptian citizens.[150] The government finally agreed to conduct an investigation.[151]

The Copts were understandably annoyed that the government made no official announcement about the incident. Cairene Copts demonstrated outside the Patriarchate and one group shouted that although the burning of the church was a great crime, silence was an even greater crime.[152] This was perhaps a comment on the inadequate response of both the

147. Misr, 18 January 1952, p.1.
148. DW ʿĀbdīn Palace Archives: Tawā'if Dīniyya 1.
149. Al-Nahhās, to emphasize his generosity, noted that he had increased 'Ibrāhīm Faraj's proposed sum of £E2,000. Misr, 8 January 1952, p.1.
150. Misr, 8 January 1952, p.1, and 11 January 1952, p.1.
151. It was not only important to the Copts to have the blame assessed, but they wanted it proved that the three Copts who were murdered were not British spies.
152. Misr, 14 January 1952, p.1, and 15 January 1952, p.2.

Patriarch and the government. Al-Nahhās followed Faraj's footsteps and made two visits to the Patriarchate in a further attempt to placate angry Copts and finally made a statement deploring the incident.[153] Messages of brotherhood were broadcast on the radio, and the Palace sent two of its people to the Patriarch to express King Fārūq's grief. To many Copts, however, these fine words meant little.[154] Copts particularly questioned the behaviour of 'Ibrāhīm Faraj; the editor of Misr condemned Faraj for failing to take steps to clear the atmosphere which had produced the incident.[155] Many Copts wanted Faraj to resign.[156]

The contemporary Egyptian historian, Muhammad 'Anīs, believes that the incident was so well handled by the government that it did not lead to the threatened withdrawal of the Copts from the nationalist movement.[157] His conclusion seems unduly optimistic. The Copts did not think that the government's reponse was satisfactory; they would have preferred to see the Wafd take more of a stand on communal violence before it culminated in the Suez riot. They had unsuccessfully begged the government for some time to keep a tighter rein on the Brethren. In many ways, Suez was the coup de grâce, the blow that destroyed any remaining confidence in the goals of the nationalist movement and in the ability of Copts and Muslims to co-exist in peace. As Misr's articles continued to prove, the Copts were not conciliated by the government's actions. Without a commitment to equality, the nationalist movement could not retain the loyalty of a minority no longer certain of its place in a shifting society.

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153. Misr, 11 January 1952, p.1, and 17 January 1952, p.2.
154. Misr, 18 January 1952, p.1.
155. Misr, 11 January 1952, p.1.
156. 'Anīs, Ḥarīq al-Qāhira, pp.23-4.
157. Ibid., pp.22-5, 45-7.

E. Summary

Ethnic propaganda should not be considered in isolation from the more purely religious propaganda, but was a natural outgrowth and, for some, the constant companion of the use of religion in politics. Increasing concern with the public role of religion made a reliance on sectarian appeals more profitable and eventually drove many Copts out of the political arena. The formation of the Society of the Coptic Nation in 1952, indicates how disaffected many young Copts had become.

Those legitimate political parties who leant most heavily on ethnicity and religion tended to be tied to the Palace. Their tactics were as indicative of their weakness as was the alliance. The Wafd, perhaps more honourable in its greater strength, represented "as near as possible....a lay tendency in Egyptian administration and politics".[158] For many years, the Copts expected that whenever the Wafd came to power, the state's attitude toward them would change for the better. The anti-Wafdist press also promoted this view, but its aim was to prove that the Wafd acted to limit Muslim access to the institutions of an Islamic state and that it showed insufficient sensitivity to the religious feelings of the majority. The Wafd made very little use of the ethnic weapon; but as its strength and support faded, it did turn increasingly to religion and finally ended by pandering to groups like the Muslim Brethren. Its inability to stand fast on its secular principles undermined everything for which it had originally fought. The most severe censure, however, must be reserved for those others, principled or otherwise, whose activities not only weakened the new political system, but sometimes made mockery of the old one by placing Coptic lives, property and the right to worship in jeopardy.

158. FO.371/20914, J3809/369/16.

CONCLUSION

"RELIGION IS GOD'S AND THE HOMELAND THE PEOPLE'S"*

This formulation, which expresses the conviction that there was a fundamental separation between religion and state, seems to have been coined by Tawfīq Dūs in 1911. It was the only statement to come out of the Coptic Congress in 'Asyūṭ that was not only accepted by many Muslims but was raised by them to the level of political cant. It became a favourite slogan of nationalists and politicians.[1] Although cheapened by frequent repetition and increasingly irrelevant with time, it neatly summarized the main political hope of the best educated and most vocal segment of the Coptic community; a segment which wanted to build a state free from religious bias and a religion free from state interference and, at the same time, gain its own freedom from ecclesiastical control.

With the creation of a new political system came new opportunities to realize that hope. It was to this end, an escape from the uncertainty of marginality, that the Copts' advocacy of democratic government, secularism, civil equality and integration in its widest sense were aimed. Many worked to develop a new collective identity with new ways of interacting for Muslims and Copts. Throughout the 1920s, their enthusiasm for this political and social experiment was matched by that of many Egyptian Muslims who seemed willing to make concessions of power in order to achieve true unity.

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* "Al-Dīn l-Allāh w-al-Waṭan l il-Jamīᶜ."

1. It was quoted from time to time by Makram and al-Naḥḥās. The latter still relied on it as late as 1951 when its bearing on reality was slight. Misr, 17 January 1951, p.1. See also Misr, 3 March 1934, p.1, for an early editorial comment on the slogan's meaninglessness.

This experiment was advanced by a number of secondary factors. Political energies were largely consumed by the struggle against the British who assisted the development of unity by providing an enemy against whom Copts and Muslims could join forces. In addition, relatively few groups were competing for political power; and the main one, the Wafd, helped ensure that Coptic participation in politics was not only tolerated but applauded. It was, of course, an advantage that the new political ideas were from outside Egypt and were not associated with either ethnic group, although eventually Western political forms were discredited in the minds of some by their association with foreign Christian power. However, early and fairly widespread adherence to these ideas and forms permitted the emergence of a Coptic elite with political aspirations. In the traditional structure, of course, Coptic notables had found their opportunities for advancement and power restricted to the civil service and the ecclesiastical and economic sectors; and, as noted previously, the first and last did not always allow unlimited advancement.

At a time when the British were slowly and reluctantly relinquishing power to the Egyptians, some Copts thought it folly to cling to the older ways whose safety appeared both illusory and unnecessary when the new arrangements offered a heady, if uncertain, reward for victory. It was clear that Muslims were going to outlast the British, and that a partnership with the former held the promise of a security far greater than that provided by the latter, whose first priority had never been Coptic well-being.

Not all Copts subscribed to this new venture or supported it without reservation. Some, and particularly those in the church, were reluctant to risk their special governing arrangements and culture

on what they saw as the far from certain success of this experiment in political and social integration. They wished instead to protect a system they knew and understood, one which had worked reasonably well in the past and which had, perhaps more important, given them power. True integration would have completely upset the balance of power in the Coptic community, and there were some who had already found the struggle with laymen in the Majlis Millī trying enough. In addition, these Copts were suspicious, not necessarily of the intentions of Muslims offering equality, but of the durability of the Muslims' support and of their ability to deliver genuine equality.

As many of these Copts suspected, Egypt was not a tabula rasa, and centuries of a particular political tradition could not be so easily erased. There was little agreement on what was an appropriate role for religion in this society, and religion inevitably worked its way into the new arrangements. One scholar has pointed out how difficult it was for Muslims, who had long seen themselves as the natural political community, to accept Western political and social concepts which dictated sharing power with people they had scorned and ruled for centuries.[2] For Christians, of course, the borrowing was easier. They had little to lose and much to gain, or so many thought. No matter what effect this new system had on the church, it still held out the promise of more individual power and greater equality.

Over the course of this period, Egyptians were drawn into a closer relationship with their state. The number of government institutions with which Egyptians had to deal and the number of statutes which regulated their lives increased. Given the clear direction of this

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2. Robert Haddad, Syrian Christians in Muslim Society (Princeton 1970), p.88.

new association with the state, it was perhaps not unwise to aim for a formal say in running that state. Even had the millet not been weakened from within by reformers seeking to eliminate corruption and waste and by secularists eager to be free of its restrictions, it would eventually have been destroyed from without by a state hungry for more power.

The Egyptian state's attitude toward the Copts manifested itself in three somewhat contradictory practices.[3] It aided the maintenance of Muslim supremacy by countenancing private and practising public discrimination. At the same time, it adhered to a political ideology which declared all men equal and which tried to replace a communal identity with a national one. It also offered, in a practice long sanctioned by tradition, the status of the majority to those who assimilated. While few Copts followed the path of ultimate assimilation and converted to Islam, a number of politicians managed to divest their ethnic identity of any significant content. In 1922 the state did contemplate a fourth method of dealing with minorities, viz., the formal incorporation of communal loyalties into the political system; however, the rejection of proportional representation in Parliament by the Constitutional Commission ruled out this approach. This was not, however, the last time that some Copts would express a preference for this method which would have guaranteed their separate political existence but would not, at least initially, have granted them appreciably more power. By 1946, with political activity increasingly fragmented, minority representation made more sense. Even Salāma Mūsā who had scoffed at the idea in 1922, became an advocate. In a much divided Parliament, even a small number of closely aligned delegates could have considerable influence.

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3. See an interesting article by Milton Esman on state policies toward minorities, "The Management of Communal Conflict", Public Policy 21 (1973), pp.49-78.

During much of the 1920s, hopes invested in the new political arrangements seemed to bear some fruit and many Copts were reasonably satisfied with the progress made toward equality. What perhaps they overlooked was the ease of granting disadvantaged minorities a larger slice of the pie when an economy is relatively prosperous. When that same economy is static or shrinking, however, any improvement in the minority's situation is likely to be interpreted as a comparable and unacceptable loss to the majority and can trigger sectarian tensions. The increasingly desperate economic situation from the 1930s and the government's unwillingness to help the poor, had a deleterious effect on intercommunal relations by increasing social tensions generally. Coptic hopes began to evaporate. The failure of Egypt's democratic institutions to work as planned and the increasing role played by Islam in political mobilization caused great unease in Coptic circles. Copts came to realize that the price of political acceptance was assimilation, the sacrifice of their ways for those of the majority.

Coptic support for the nationalist movement was useful. It brought more activists into the struggle and proved Muslim tolerance to sceptical outsiders. It was never, however, either essential to the success of the movement or vital to governing the country. As the British relinquished more and more power, the need for the Copts was less and less. Particularly after the 1936 treaty was signed, the usefulness of Westernized Copts who could so eloquently present Egyptian views to the European powers was diminished. By the 1940s, those marks of Westernization, such as Makram's first name, Ghālī's French poetry, and the Wīsās' Protestantism were increasingly suspect. Unfortunately, many of these politically active Copts had no other identity open to them; they had long since chosen European over Egyptian culture.

As it became clear that the new government was not able to carry out the promises made in the Constitution, some Copts, like those whose voice Misr was, first pointed out defects in the hope of remedying them and later became more and more prepared to promote the special interests of their group. This was perhaps less a matter of protecting their cultural integrity than of preserving that quantum of power that had previously been held by them. They had been willing to make sacrifices in some areas in order to achieve what were perceived of as greater gains in others. Once the latter turned out to be mainly illusory, they felt compelled to fight for all the old protections. Perhaps one of the reasons the reformers were still fighting so hard for control of the church at the end of the monarchy was that they saw it as a vehicle for fighting oppression and protecting the community. If they could only reform the institution, then they could make it serve the whole range of present-day needs from running schools to lobbying the government. The clergy, in general, vitiated this plan not only by their near-sightedness and stubbornness but by their quiescent loyalty to the monarchy. The Liaison Committee and the church's behaviour over the Suez murders and church sacking in 1952 are some of the first signs of a break in that quiescence.

The 1938 election campaign was one turning point. It forced upon many Copts the realization that they could not act in politics without risk to themselves, their party and their community. Some perhaps saw that both Palace and government were following the practice of medieval rulers who allowed the mob to vent its frustrations upon a vulnerable and disliked minority as a means of defusing resentments having little to do with minority behaviour and much generally to do with that of the government. A more serious turning point came with the general

loosening of political restrictions at the end of the war. Intolerance of the Coptic right to participate in politics became widespread among Muslims. As Misr dismally concluded in the late 1940s, there was no equality in Egypt, and nor was there ever likely to be any.

The extent to which Coptic communal demands snowballed in this decade is curious but may merely reflect the wide-ranging complaints levelled at minority behaviour by Muslims. Complaints about the prohibition on ringing church bells and the refusal to admit Copts to the Arabic Language Academy were routinely coupled with grimmer accounts of communal violence and often received the same weight. These grievances seemingly compounded one another and added up to a whole that may have seemed far greater than the sum of the parts. Discrimination no doubt was more of a problem in the Egypt of 1947 than the Egypt of 1927, but the more vigorous and belligerent discussion of the problem by both sides certainly added to that problem and increased tensions. No doubt part of the Copts' belligerence was due to a keenly felt sense of betrayal; while discrimination had been an accepted and legitimate part of the traditional system, it was a clear moral and legal wrong in democratic Egypt. There was a larger gap between the ideal and the real, and this perhaps unsettled the Copts. They understood their position under the millet sytem; in democratic Egypt, they could not be sure where they stood. This last is particularly true given the number of groups, operating in the political sphere, who only adhered in part or not at all to the constitution.

By this time, Muslims were inclined to see a malign Coptic hand in everything. The Copts were thought to be conspiring to monopolize the civil service, take over the government and help the British and the missionaries in their nefarious designs. Muslims did not, however,

develop any coherent and well-thought-out conspiracy theories. Not a single individual, nor any group or movement, in Egypt, sought to build political power on an anti-Coptic foundation alone. In some cases, the use of sectarian propaganda was almost offhand; in all cases, it was a supplement and not the main diet. This propaganda was never very systematic or sophisticated. It most often echoed traditional sentiments about the place of the Copts and expressed the feeling, sometimes in print and sometimes in violence, that as a people the Copts had risen above their proper station. This is a key point; as Shaikh al-Marāghī acutely observed, the problem was as much social as it was political or religious.[4] A reversal of the natural order had occurred, and this demanded an adjustment in the relative positions of the two peoples.

Curiously, given Salāma Mūsā's advanced and sometimes eccentric views, his career provides a kind of paradigm for the community. Like so many of his co-religionists, he approved of the British role in Egypt before the First World War. He became, after the war, a committed nationalist and secularist and was, for some time, an ardent supporter of the Wafd. These commitments also paralleled those of many Copts. As the father of Egyptian socialism, he was not interested in church or communal affairs; like many Coptic politicians, he leant toward a wider national or even international perspective. In spite of this, he had retreated, by the mid-1940s, into communalism. He was always a forceful advocate, whether of nationalism or Coptic rights, but his influence on the Coptic community was probably at its height between 1945 and 1952 when he was writing for the newspaper Misr. His

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4. FO.371/20914, J3809/369/16.

communalism was less disliked than his earlier social and poltical radicalism, but some in the community saw his new views as dangerously provocative. They felt that the risks involved in repeated confrontation with Muslims on a wide range of issues were too great for so weak a community. However, the despair that lay beneath those views was shared. Like other Copts, Mūsā came to realize that the experiment had failed and that the Copts, as a community, required special protection. The clergy, much compromised by inaction and quiet submission, could not be relied upon and no longer seemed to have the power, although they did appear to wake to the danger in their midst toward the end of the period. Mūsā, as one remedy, called for proportional representation in Parliament and the abolition of Islam as the religion of state. His chances of instituting the one were about as great as his opportunities for disestablishing the other. He also demanded that Muslim religious groups be controlled by the government and their political activities prohibited.[5] He, who had once promoted secular institutions, insisted on the provision of Christian religious instruction in government schools and air time for Christian religious broadcasts. If the Copts could not be genuinely equal, then they would have to work toward a position that would grant them safety through separation.

A small segment of the Coptic community did become, along with Salāma Mūsā, politicized in the face of this increasing Muslim hostility. However, with the sole exception of Murqus Sergius who, like Salāma Mūsā, belongs to a special category, not one Coptic politician became a communal politician. The policies and thinking of most Coptic politicians so

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5. See his mocking suggestion that the Copts should form organizations to parallel those of the Muslim Brethren and Shabāb Muhammad in Misr, 10 May 1946, p.1.

mirrored that of their Muslim counterparts that their presence at all levels in the government probably did little to ensure Coptic interests a hearing, let alone acceptance.[6] The behaviour of 'Ibrāhīm Faraj in the case of the Suez church sacking is evidence of how little such politicians could do for the community. Some Coptic politicians had the good fortune to die before political activity became fraught with difficulties, and they were not replaced. Others gave up politics. Those who remained active until the bitter end may have worked behind the scenes to ease sectarian tensions, but they did not defend Coptic rights publicly. By 1952 they could not have done so without opting out of the political system and without risking their personal safety. They had been co-opted into the ruling elite and their community had to manage as best it could without their talents. At least in the early period, these politicians had helped to serve as an integrating force; but, by the 1940s, there were fewer Coptic politicians who could serve as a buffer for the community, and the influence of those who were active was diminished. As the church was no longer the middleman in government-communal affairs and had been discredited within the community, a serious gap in representing the community's interests to the government ultimately resulted. As early as 1939, Misr stated baldly that the Copts were thinking of abandoning Egyptian patriotism because they had failed to build any kind of national consensus with the Muslims, in the paper's view, Coptic access to public life was and was likely to remain limited.[7] The community began to feel that political action was ineffective, if not dangerous, and it withdrew to

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6. See a discussion of the phenomenon with relation to other minorities in Cynthia Enloe, Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies (Middlesex 1980), p.226.
7. Misr, 3 March 1939, p.1.

the precarious safety of its ethnic boundaries. Elie Kedourie's conclusion about the position of the Jews in the Iraqi state has its parallel here: in terms of their civil responsibilities, the Copts were Egyptians first and Christians second; when it came to apportioning rights, their Christianity suddenly became paramount and assigned them to an inferior place.[8]

Although co-operation among Muslim and Coptic elite facilitated political unity, a portion of the Muslim elite was partly responsible for exaggerating ethnic divisions and manipulating them for political gain. However large a share of the responsibility they bear for destroying the political hopes of the Copts, they were still less frightening than those who were unwilling to work within the constitutional limits. It was, after all, the constitution which established the Copts' legal equality and their right to participate in politics. The Copts, because of their numbers and geographic situation, were confined to operating within the bounds of the institutional framework. It was not that they opposed the rules, although they disliked the constitutional article naming Islam the religion of state, but that they objected to the fact that the rules had not been followed and that there was so little consensus regarding their legitimacy. The Copts had little choice but to play by the rules even when others were ignoring them. Many also believed, for a very long time, that the rules offered the community its very best hope. The only Coptic group to act outside the law was the Society of the Coptic Nation, whose purpose was to create a radically different society in part by increasing the distance between Muslims and Copts.

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8. Elie Kedourie, The Chatham House Version..., p.306.

Its fate did not recommend its measures to other Copts. Other groups, like the Muslim Brethren, Misr al-Fatāt, and the Shabāb Muhammad also wished to create a different kind of society, constructed on a basis other than the constitution, and could act more easily outside the law.

The political appeals of such groups were often based on Islam. By the 1930s, there were a number of competitors for the privilege of being the foremost public exponent of Islam. This perhaps forced the state and the regular parties into more extreme positions on religion than they might otherwise have taken, although from the very beginning of the Constitutional Monarchy they had not entirely ignored the appeal of religious issues for the masses. Muslims running against other Muslims would beg the voters to elect them as the candidates with the greatest desire to protect and glorify Islam. Each group hoped to be seen as the one, true defender of the faith; in this endeavour, Coptic support could only be an embarrassment. Complaints about discrimination disconcerted the government but did not move it to action. On the one hand, it was failing to provide what it was legally obliged to provide; on the other, its very failure could be commended as Muslim zeal.

There was, of course, no real notion of a loyal opposition. By definition, the opposition was disloyal, and one of the clearest ways of being disloyal was by a lack of public devotion to Islam. Islam, in addition, was not only a weapon against internal political opponents but was a powerful one against the West and the British in particular. It was a great misfortune that the one thing that was probably most successful in rallying the Egyptians against imperialism was also something that could so easily and almost without effort be turned against the Copts.

Muslims clearly relied on their religious identity to assist them in political organization. Religious and ethnic differences were manipulated by individuals, organizations and the state to advance interests that had little to do with ethnicity or religion. Perhaps because it promised at best little pay-off and at worst to exacerbate problems, the Copts, by and large, did not use their ethnic identity to organize in the political arena. As the need for communal defence grew, they began to use community organizations that were essentially non-political as platforms from which to make political claims and defend minority interests. It was only toward the end of this period and immediately thereafter that the Copts turned to their ethnicity to organize for political gain. The Society of the Coptic Nation is, of course, the most noteworthy example of this phenomenon. The Liaison Committee is perhaps an equally interesting development: various normally hostile minorities combining forces to lobby for their joint interests.

The attempt to achieve equality was not a total fiasco, and it would be wrong to stress the Copts' relative failure to become part of the political community in the 1940s at the expense of their success in doing so during the revolution and its aftermath. The middle class perhaps benefited the most from the limited integration which was all that was ultimately achieved. The real situation of the Coptic peasantry probably remained largely unimproved although they too may have profited from the peaceful relations and good-fellowship that the nationalist movement for a time bestowed. Poor Copts may have realized, in any case, that their Muslim neighbours had as few opportunities as did they. Poverty was a vice more relentless than religion. The rich, as always, were exempt from most problems. The

new system gave them more power, but their money and European tastes gave them the option of leaving any time difficulties arose.[9]

It was, of course, the Copts' success, however modest it might have appeared to them, that caused a backlash in the last part of the monarchy. Until almost the end, the Copts were generally adequately represented, at least numerically, in politics; and opposition to their participation, although seemingly widespread, was not unanimous. There was some acceptance of the fact that religion ought not to be a factor in politics, the bureaucracy or any sector of civil life. What discrimination there was was usually unofficial and informal; the constitutional article naming Islam the religion of state mandated no specific discriminatory practices to be carried out by the government. The Copts succeeded in making some kind of place for themselves, even if it was not quite the place for which they had hoped. The notion of equality had its adherents and at least held a potential for some future ascendancy. Statements of brotherly love, often spoken with sincerity, are still part of political rhetoric today. The ideological groundwork was at least laid. However threatening the situation might have seemed in the 1940s, the Copts were not so worried that they chose to emigrate as they would later in the 1960s. Perhaps this was because their economic power seemed reasonably secure.

The Copts, of course, had never been completely without honour or respect in their own country. Egypt, due to its homogeneity, had experienced less ethnic strife than many other parts of the Middle East. Some Copts had always reached positions of authority in the society. New opportunities had been opened to them in this century, and what

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9. Wāṣif Ghālī's frequent response to any distress engendered by his government or party was to flee to Europe.

many middle-class and perhaps even upper-class Copts probably resented most was what they saw as the gradual restriction or withdrawal of those opportunities in the 1940s. Men who possessed the talent for politics or diplomacy were consigned to a career in business. Others who entered the professions with ambitions for judgeships or professorships of medicine found themselves stuck on the middle rungs of the career ladder. Ultimately, the Assistant Oriental Secretary's 1937 conclusion was perhaps pessimistic but not wrong: as long as the Copts were content to remain underdogs and not aspire to power, Islam would prove tolerant.[10]

Communal bonds seemed to grow stronger and more relevant as pressure on the Copts increased. There is something almost irrational about this defiant emphasis on communal ties at a time when Muslim hostility appeared increasingly life-threatening and the benefits of majority status more than usually clear. Given that the Copts believed that all they could win was second place, that the top awards were reserved for Muslims and that their lives and property were at risk, it is curious that more Copts did not opt out of the system by conversion or emigration. Secularism had not proved to be a very satisfactory option. Instead, kinship, communal networks and the church became increasingly important to some of those trying to escape the effects of discrimination. In the declining years of the monarchy, Misr tried to persuade the Copts to act not as individuals pursuing disparate goals, but as a group defending common interests. The Copts had always had surprising freedom to form a wide variety of communal societies, and this privilege gave them a ready-made basis for organization. There were, of course, occasional Muslim objections to

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10. FO.407/221, part 122, No.5 (Enclosure). An Appreciation of the Situation of the Copts under the new regime in Egypt by Mr. Hamilton, 1937.

this prerogative, but no serious attempt seems to have been made to limit it. In addition, by trying to strengthen faith, Copts like those who were members of the Society of the Coptic Nation, were trying to strengthen both the will to resist and the possibilities for collective action. In addition, if they could keep Copts and Muslims apart by emphasizing their differences rather than their similarities, they might ultimately be able to reduce the number of clashes. Attempts such as these were ultimately defeated by the fall of the monarchy and the institution of new regime which was less tolerant of all kinds of peripheral activity. The Copts no longer had to fear a gradually worsening communal situation with its concomitant of violence, but equality remained as distant a notion as ever.

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al-Dustūr

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La Liberté

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al-Majalla al-Jadīda

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al-Manāra al-Misriyya

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al-Misā'

Miṣr

Miṣr al-Fatāt

al-Miṣri

al-Muqattam

al-Musawwar

al-Nadhīr

al-Nizām

Nūr al-'Islām

al-Risāla

Rūz al-Yūsuf

al-Shaʿb

al-Shubrā

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